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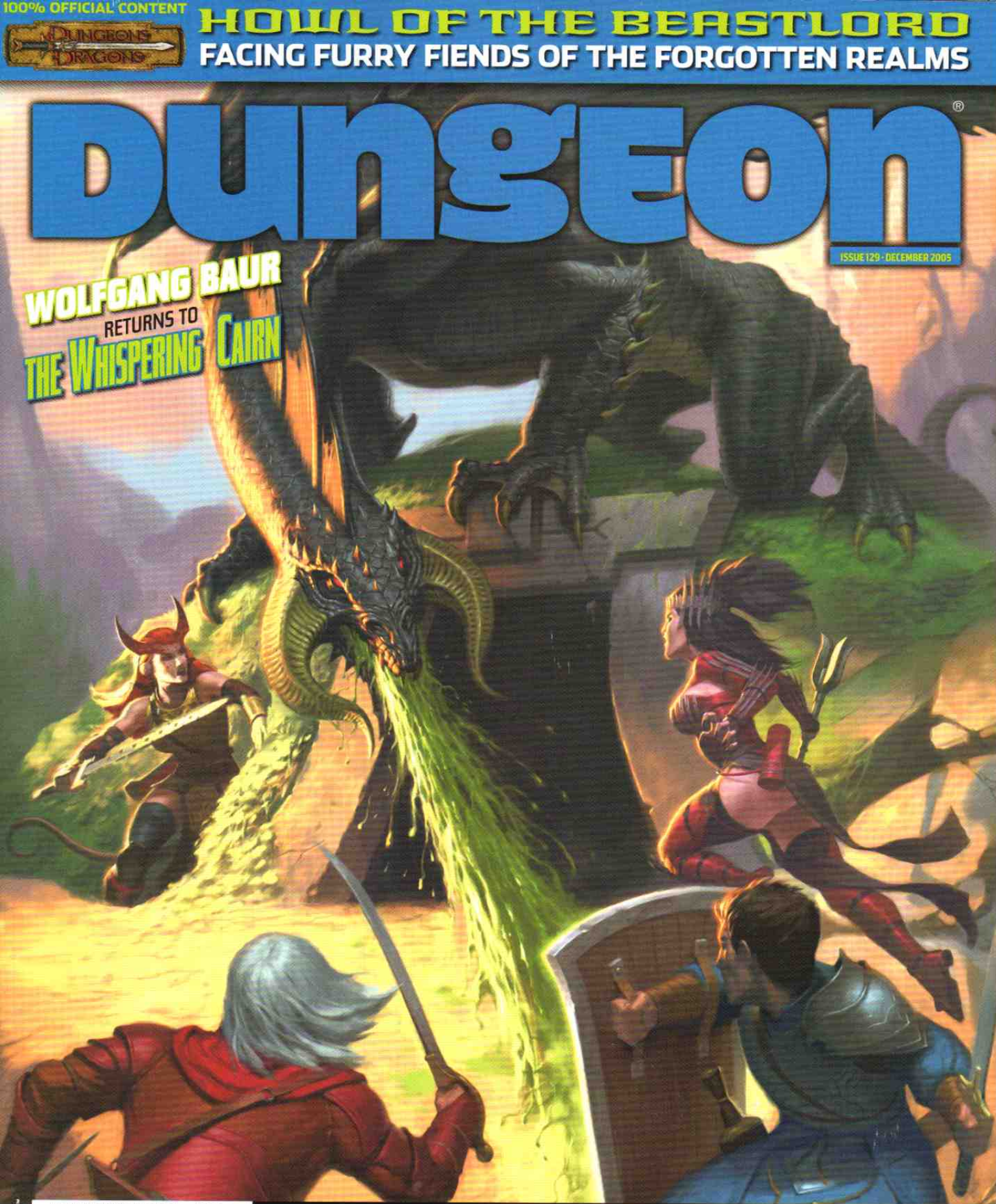
DUNGEON®

ISSUE 129 · DECEMBER 2005

WOLFGANG BAUR RETURNS TO THE WHISPERING CAIRN



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ISSUE #129 DECEMBER 2005 VOLUME 19, NO 12

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AGE OF WORMS ADVENTURE PATH

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Wolfgang Baur
When the PCs return to Diamond Lake to consult with their friend Allustan, they find the town in shambles and Allustan missing. Locals tell tales of a terrible dragon's rampage through town. Unfortunately for the characters, the dragon is only the beginning. An Age of Worms Adventure Path scenario for 11th-level characters.

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Uri Kurlianchik
A killer has come to Oakbridge, and she won't stop her murderous campaign until she exacts revenge against a group of ex-carnies who have come to Sharn in an attempt to start new lives in the aftermath of the Last War. An Eberron adventure for 5th-level characters.

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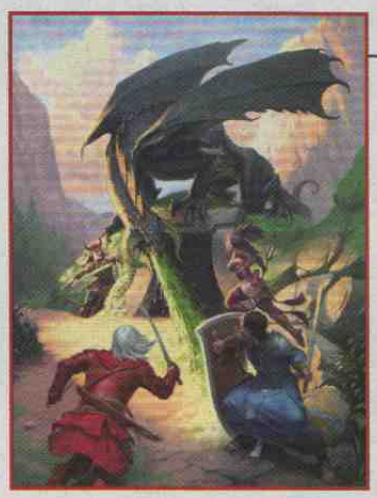
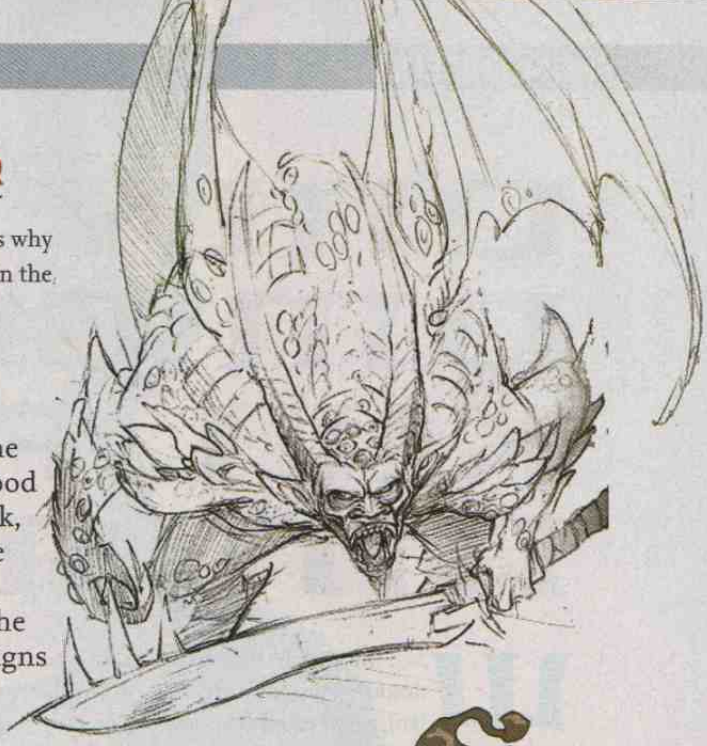
Wil Upchruch
The Beastlord Malar has had enough of the people of the Silver Marches trying to "civilize" the Northlands. Now, with the help of a powerful new weapon, his followers are set to cleanse the stain of Silverymoon from the land. A Forgotten Realms adventure for 17th-level characters.



ON THE COVER

James Ryman shows us why it's unwise to meddle in the affairs of dragons.



"And so they came at last deep into the glen; and there stood a sheer wall of rock, and in the wall the Dark Door gaped before them like the mouth of night. Signs and figures were carved above its wide arch too dim to read, and fear flowed from it like a grey vapour."

J.R.R. Tolkien
The Lord of the Rings, Volume V

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DUNGEON ADVENTURE PLAYER REWARDS!

Take advantage of the RPGA'S Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of DUNGEON! Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 1/31/06.

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Murder in Oakbridge (129MO1DN)
A Gathering of Winds (129GW1DN)
The Twisted Run (129TR1DN)

Only a DM Can Kill a Ninja

When the acid beetle swarm devoured the paladin Abelard, we were only two sessions into our weekly Age of Worms campaign here at the Paizo office. The stunned heroes gathered his grisly remains and brought them back to Diamond Lake's shrine of Heironeous, where he could be buried according to the traditions of his faith. In the campaign's most poignant moment to date, one of the fallen hero's companions painted a phrase upon the wall of the party's home base: "Abelard's Band." The paladin's loss weighed heavily on the campaign, and continues to be felt months after it occurred.

During the PCs' exploration of the secret chambers below the Dourstone mine (see "The Three Faces of Evil," DUNGEON #125), conversation turned to the absent Abelard. They discussed using spoils gained from slain cultists to purchase a stone cenotaph and place it near the abandoned mine office that serves as their headquarters. The only one who didn't have much of anything to contribute to the grave discussion was the ninja Vyth, who had not said a word in the course of the entire campaign on account of the fact that he is mute.

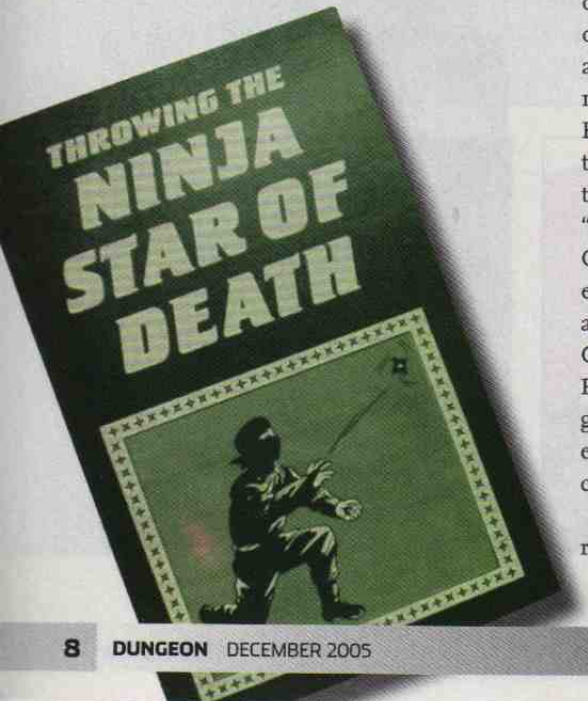
Was mute.

It turns out he may have wanted to get in some words about what the party graveyard should look like, because after the events of the last session, I'm afraid Vyth the ninja has joined Abelard the paladin as an official resident. Yes, that's right. Last week, I killed the ninja. Really it was a horrible villain called the Faceless One who did the dirty deed, using that old DM trick, the *magic missile*, to crushing effect, but I'll take the blame.

Before I go on about what effect the death of a mute ninja will have upon the party, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on his brief career, so that the sheer power of his "Vythness" can be appreciated by all. For starters, Vyth wasn't a very good ninja. When his player, DRAGON Assistant Editor Mike McArtor, came to me with the idea of running a ninja, my first reaction was not only to say no, but to scream "NOOOOOOO!" from the top of the Gen Con convention center so that all gamers everywhere could know how serious I was about protecting my beloved WORLD OF GREYHAWK from the incursion of Power-Ranger-like ninja influence. (Well, every gamer but Mike, of course, who was cruelly trapped back in the office and couldn't come to the convention.)

Later, in a story outlined in the editorial for DRAGON #331, I decided to relent and let Mike have his way, although I was still a bit worried that the antics of a ninja might come off as too superheroic for the gritty campaign I'd been envisioning. As it happens, I shouldn't have worried. If Vyth had any sweet ninja skills, he failed to display them in the campaign. In any combat, you could be sure that Vyth (with his robust d6 Hit Dice and 11 Constitution) would be the first to hit the ground. I'm not sure I've seen a D&D player roll more 1s than Mike managed with poor Vyth. And we're not just talking about attack rolls. Vyth also excelled at failing saving throws and (especially) Balance checks. One time he turned invisible and climbed a wall to get the drop on some villains only to fail his Jump check and land himself into negative hit points.

Because poor Vyth never spoke up in his own defense, we have no famous quotes with which to remember him. We have little insight into who he was, or what he believed in. His grave marker, next to Abelard's, won't record a list of his honored achievements (mostly because he didn't have any). But it will stand as a symbol, a marker honoring a paragon of bad dice rolling, failed saves, and last-minute escapes from death (and one near-escape). A marker of great laughs and a great player adept at taking bad news in stride. The group may be named after Abelard, but the legend of Vyth will be with us forever.



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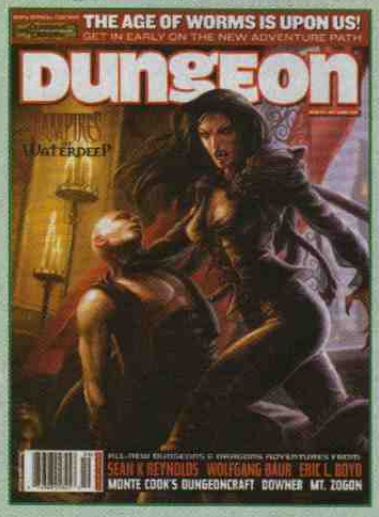
Prison Mail

Dungeon #126


THE AGE OF WORMS IS UPON US!
GET IN EARLY ON THE NEW ADVENTURE PATH
DUNGEON
WATERDEEP
SEAN K REYNOLDS WOLFGANG BAUR ERIC L. BOYD
MONTE COOK'S DUNGEONCRAFT DOWNER MT. ZOGON

Once in a while, a great new author sweeps in with a marvelous vision that is as refreshing as it is surprising. *Dungeon* #126 featured one such author, B. Matthew Conklin III. Matt's adventure, "The Menagerie," combined a ravid, some shocker lizards, and an old curio shop into one of the most entertaining scenarios we've published in a long time.

It's a good thing Matt was up to the challenge, because the other authors in that issue were far from first-timers. Wolfgang Baur, the former *Dragon* and *Dungeon* editor who this month brings us "A Gathering of Winds," contributed "The Clockwork Fortress," following up on themes he first introduced in #115's "Raiders of the Black Ice."

Forgotten Realms guru Eric L. Boyd ain't too shabby, either. #126 kicked off his three-part Vampires of Waterdeep Campaign Arc with "The Blood of Malar," and Sean K Reynolds joined the growing legion of Age of Worms Adventure Path authors to deliver "Encounter at Blackwall Keep," the first installment to introduce dragons to the ongoing campaign.

Back issues of *Dungeon* #125 and dozens of other great issues are available at paizo.com.

Fiendish Foot Gets Props

Dungeon #122's "Fiendish Footprints" fit so nicely into my current campaign. At this point, the PCs are on their way to the Ashen Tower. Planning for the upcoming game night I got an idea that excited me probably more than it should have: I could make a real wooden knag map! Players love getting props, and what a great object to create for them. So, last night I went in search of chopped trees in a nearby park. I found a suitable slice of wood and, "voila." Attached is a photo of the knag map. Thanks, *Dungeon* and thank you Tito Leati, Chad DuLac, and Jim Zubkavich for making my game all the better!

Brian Baier
Via Email

Poster Map Request

I'm a great fan of *Dungeon* and have been for a very long time. About a year ago, I finally managed to finish getting the entire collection when I stumbled across an auction on eBay and was able to buy issues #1 through #6. I've even been published in its pages a few times.

You mentioned in Prison Mail that you're looking for ideas for more poster maps. In the old *City of Greyhawk* boxed set, there was a beautiful poster-sized illustration of the city that showed literally every building in it. It was great. I framed the poster when my players were in the City of Greyhawk and kept it on the wall behind me so they could literally see where they were going and have a good idea of what the city looked and felt like. It helped me as a DM as well.

I'd love to see an illustration of the City of Greyhawk circa 591 CY that matches the map put out in the *Living Greyhawk Journal* as a poster included with *Dungeon*.

Andy Miller
Bryan, OH

While I would love to publish a poster map of the City of Greyhawk, it doesn't look likely in the near future. For now, readers looking for a complete picture of the city should seek out a copy of the Living Greyhawk Journal #2, now several years out of print and available exclusively at conventions and on online auction sites. We are currently planning for at least one more Age of Worms-related poster map that fans of the Greyhawk setting will probably enjoy, but for now the exact details of that map must remain a mystery.

Dungeon #130

Within the Circle

By Sam Brown

The hamlet of Thistle has a problem. The river they depend upon for trade and food was recently poisoned with a tide of filth, and a goblin named Belig has claimed responsibility. If the people of Thistle don't pay a ransom, Belig has promised them much worse will come with the next poison tide. A FORGOTTEN REALMS adventure for 1st-level characters.

Palace of Plenty

By Tito Leati

The fair Yayosei were the children of an ancient tribe and benign river spirits, until they tried to preserve their paradise by trapping the power of the Void Dragon. Their home was indeed preserved, but at a terrible cost. Today, the descendants of the Yayosei have degenerated into beasts, but what remains trapped within the Palace of Plenty is much worse. An *Oriental Adventures* scenario for 10th-level characters.

The Spire of Long Shadows

By Jesse Decker

Centuries ago, the despotic priest-king Kyuss sacrificed his nation to fuel his lust for divinity. He left legions of the hungry dead in his wake, along with a ruined city that now hides the truth behind the advent of the coming apocalypse. A man became a god in this worm-eaten city, and the secrets hidden within may hold the keys to his defeat. An Age of Worms Adventure Path scenario for 13th-level characters.

The 30 Best Reprints

Back in issue #116 we saw a list of the best adventures ever printed—will those adventures ever come out as 3rd edition reprints? It's great we have all these sequels coming out, but for the younger folks who never got to play the original *Temple of Elemental Evil*, playing a sequel is like watching *The Two Towers* while never having seen *Fellowship of the Ring*.

Steven Shepherdson
Via Email

The Two Towers is good enough that it would probably be worth watching anyway, but I get your point. While I can't promise 3rd edition reprints of any classic modules in the near future, those of you who missed them the first time around will be pleased to learn that several of the Top 30 are now available in PDF format as affordable downloads from Paizo.com, under special license from our friends at Wizards of the Coast. The Top 30 doubles as one of the finest gaming shopping lists you're likely to find anywhere, and is a good starting point for further exploration of the rich publishing history of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS.

Challenge Accepted

I wanted to comment on a dialogue occurring in *DRAGON* magazine because I feel that the root of the problem could be addressed by *DUNGEON*. Letters in the past few issues of *DRAGON* have commented on the lack of women in D&D gaming groups. In *DRAGON* #333, Joanne Ellem wrote that most women leave the game in response to the overwhelming presence of female objectification and/or because of the hack-and-slash attitude of most gamers. Ken Lacy goes even farther in *DRAGON* #334, noting that male gamers should think more about their comments and actions in and out of game regarding female players.

I have gamed with a handful of women over the past 25 years and have really enjoyed their focus on story and problem solving with their minds rather than with a sword. The D&D rules now provide a system for giving experience for problem solving—let's use those rules.

Ken's call to action is only part of the battle to include more female gamers. I think that *DUNGEON* can be at the forefront of the other half of the battle by encouraging story telling and plot development that interest women. Though I have been extremely excited about *DUNGEON'S* recent format change, some slight changes in emphasis could help include the types of adventures that most women and I like.

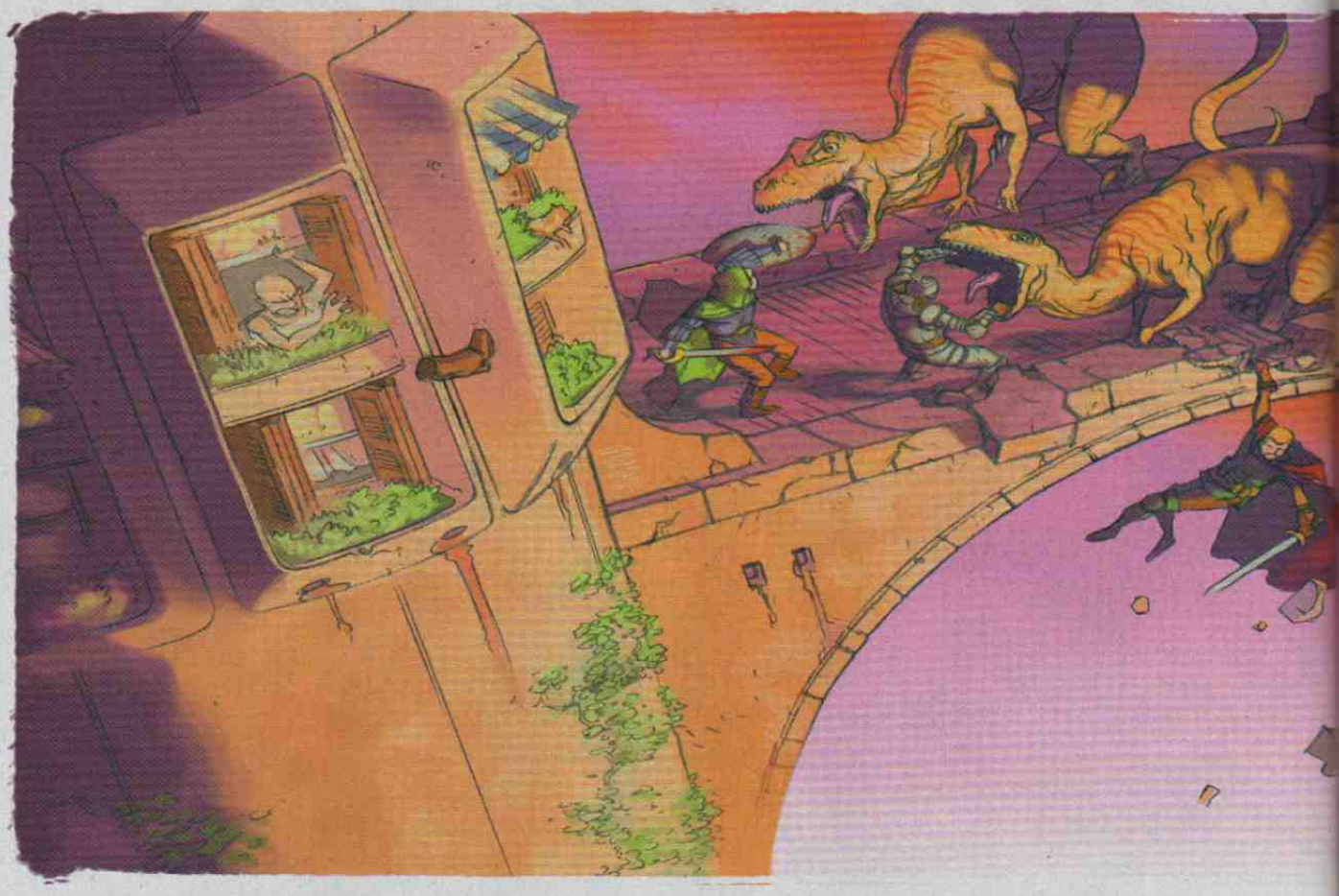
The past six issues of *DUNGEON* magazine only had one adventure that was not a dungeon crawl. Nothing epitomizes the stereotypes of Munchkinesque gaming more than a dungeon crawl. Admittedly, the unique non-linear adventure "The Whispering Cairn" was a recent dungeon that got me excited. However, the investigation aspect of "The Styes" in issue #121, the monster ally in "Box of Flumph" (issue #118), and the environmental plot lead-in of "Palace of the Twisted King" in issue #116 are all examples bursting the stereotypes that keep most female gamers away from the table. The planning behind the recent adventure path led me to hope that mazes of rooms with a monster in each would give way to smart adventures and open-ended plots that make for more interesting gaming.

However, the most recent adventure path, "The Three Faces of Evil," was once again a dungeon crawl. The introduction called for the PCs sneaking into the mine, and more emphasis should have been placed on this aspect of the adventure.

I would challenge *DUNGEON* to publish more non-typical adventures if they wish to see more female gamers stick with D&D. Furthermore, the description at the beginning of each adventure (Setting, Level, Dungeon Crawl or Urban) should be fleshed out to be more descriptive and perhaps encourage a wider variety of adventures. Dungeon Crawl, Urban and Wilderness seem to be describing two different things—the type of adventure and the location. Maybe you should separate these categories so we see the type (eg. Dungeon Crawl, Investigative, Event-Based, etc.) and the setting (eg. Urban, Cold Wilderness, Coastal, etc).

Lance Larkin
Via Email

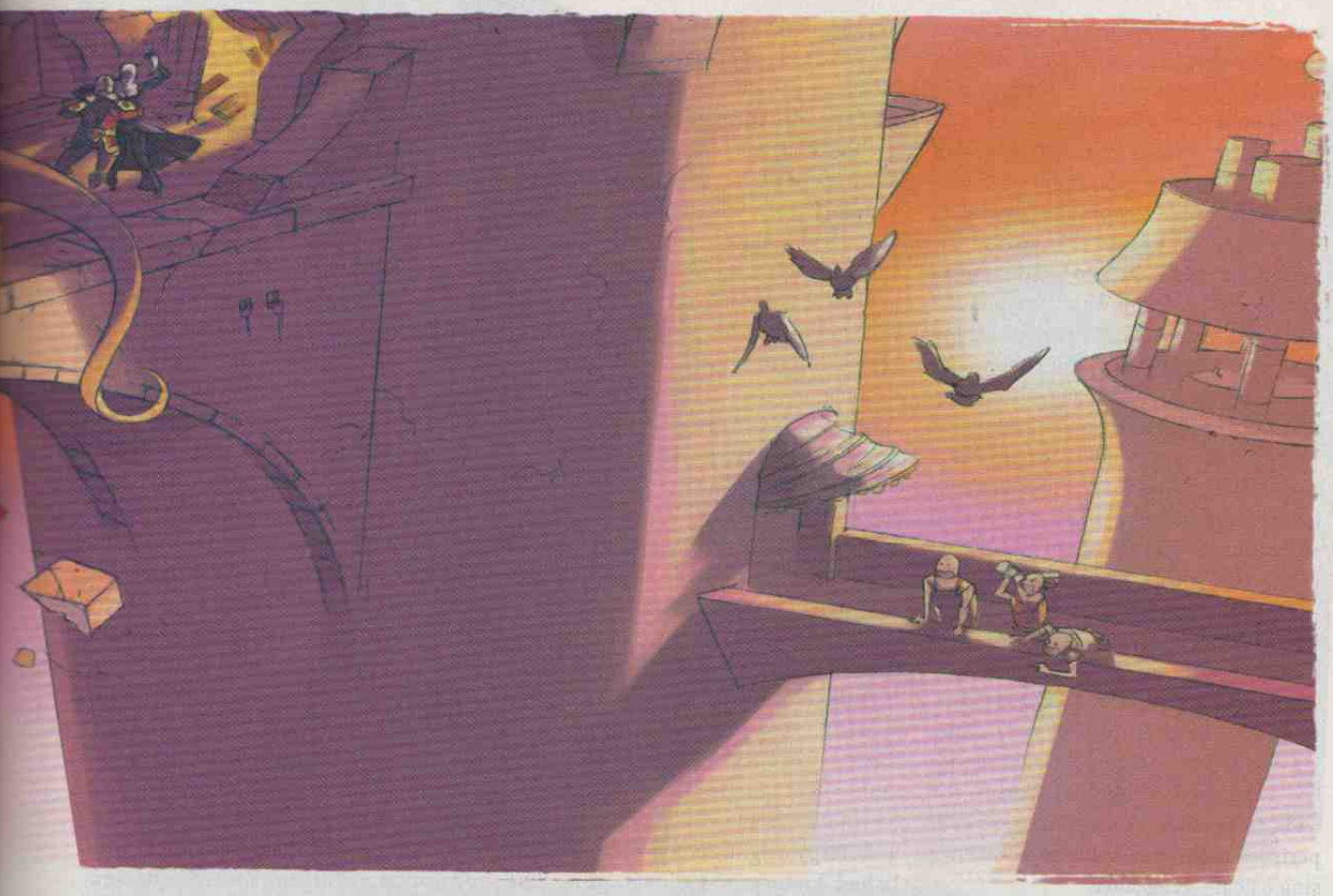
All of the boys who work on this magazine have a deep (one might say "pathetic") affinity for the classic dungeon crawl, but even we agree that too much of a good thing can sometimes get you into trouble. As a result, we've increasingly been looking for (and buying) adventures that offer more than a simple snatch-and-grab. As always, we'll continue to refine the adventures in this magazine to make them appeal to a wide variety of D&D enthusiasts, our female readers very definitely included.—Erik Mona



MURDER IN OAKBRIDGE

BY URI KURLIANCHIK
BY RAMÓN PÉREZ
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI

EBERRON, LEVEL (1ST–5TH), URBAN



Oakbridge is a haven in the City of Towers, a relatively quiet district with friendly neighbors and a cozy atmosphere. Alas, even a quiet place like Oakbridge isn't immune to the repercussions of the Last War. A killer has come to Oakbridge, and she won't stop her murderous work until she exacts revenge against a group of ex-carnies who have come to Sharn in an attempt to start new lives in the shadows of the Last War.

"Murder in Oakbridge" is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure suitable for a group of four 5th-level characters. Although set in the metropolis of Sharn in the EBERRON campaign setting, it can be converted to other campaign worlds as detailed in the "Adapting the Adventure" sidebar. This adventure is a murder mystery, and is presented in a freeform manner. The exact route a party takes to solving the Oakbridge Murders can vary wildly, so make sure you're familiar with the descriptions of the crime scenes, the various clues the PCs can find, and the NPCs they will encounter.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

During the Last War, any diversion from the daily atrocities became a welcome luxury to the anxious population of Breland. High on the list of diversions were traveling circus groups that brought crude, vulgar, and often violent entertainment to the citizenry at affordable prices.

One such group was the famed Peace Circus, a group of war orphans turned artists and showmen. The Peace Circus did what it could to spread a message of hope and peace among the rural population of Breland. Many disagreed with their pacifistic and anti-government views, but none who visited the traveling circus harbored malice against the performers.

The Peace Circus's most popular act was an amusing dance performed by a pair of trained deinonychuses named Kaiwakit and Panch. Imported at great expense from the Talenta Plains and trained by an expert named Volin Krober, the on-stage antics of the two brightly-colored dinosaurs brought joy and entertainment to dozens, if not hundreds of war-torn villages near the end of the Last War.

Yet one evening, tragedy struck the Peace Circus. The dinosaur trainer, a man named Volin Krober, had fallen in love with Corlina, the wife of the circus's strongman. Distracted by his love, Volin failed to see how his prize dinosaurs had been growing sickly and cantankerous. When he tried to put on his show a few days later, the rabid dinosaurs went berserk and attacked the audience, including a young changeling mother and her baby daughter. This changeling was Ziki,

a small-time thief who had come to visit the circus, hoping to find some solace in the wake of news her husband had been killed on the war's front lines.

In the time it took Volin and the rest of the circus crew to subdue the ferocious dinosaurs, several people were wounded. Ziki's child was torn to ribbons and she herself lost two fingers to the dinosaur's savagery. The local Watch responded quickly to the uproar, deemed the act too dangerous, confiscated the beasts, and fined the circus into bankruptcy. The Peace Circus disbanded and its members scattered across the now peaceful kingdom of Breland, each eager to put behind them the memories of the tragedy. Several of the carnies came to Sharn and settled in the comfortable district of Oakbridge.

After the tragedy, Ziki spent several days convalescing. Once she recovered from her wounds, she was shocked to discover that no one was seriously punished for the death of her only child. No one even apologized for ruining her life. She had been forgotten. Worse—she had been ignored. Something in her soul perished then, and her life narrowed to a single goal—vengeance.

Adventure Synopsis

A successful art dealer dies after falling from his balcony, but a careful examination of his body proves he was murdered. Every passing day yields additional victims, each with small patches of skin missing. As the PCs dig deeper into the case, they discover that all of the victims were members of the Peace Circus in their youth. The little skin pieces that the killer removes are the tattoos that identify them as members.

The investigation proves problematic. Vague clues and false rumors mislead the PCs into suspecting or confronting two innocent men. Worse, the killer soon learns that the PCs are on her trail and tries to deal with them using her own violent methods. The PCs must uncover Ziki before she finishes her bloody work and turns her attention to them.

Adventure Hooks

A dramatic method to start this adventure is to have the PCs witness Svan's murder, as detailed in Murder 1 on page 28. You need only create a reason for the PCs to be passing through Oakbridge to start the adventure in this manner.

Otherwise, you'll need to draw the PCs in from elsewhere. In this case, Sergeant **Viduk** (LG warforged fighter 3) of the Sharn Watch approaches the PCs for aid. With no other accomplished detectives in the area, the PCs are recommended to Viduk based on their previous successes and adventures. Viduk himself is good at scaring away thugs and hooligans, but his investigative skills leave much to be desired. He can offer the PCs a 1,250 gp award if they can catch the murderer. If the PCs accept his offer, he takes them to the Oakbridge Church to examine Svans's body before it is cremated. If asked what he thinks has happened, Viduk admits that he is not very good at thinking. That's why he wants to hire the PCs.

PART ONE: OAKBRIDGE

Oakbridge is located in Middle Northedge in the city of Sharn, a quiet and sleepy neighborhood with no established history of violent crime. The majority of the townhouses and apartments in Oakbridge are well-built, if middle-class. The district is not ostentatious—an Oakbridge address conveys no status on its owner, but the buildings are large and the inhabitants friendly. They tend to keep an eye out for one another. Someone who moves to Oakbridge will have a dozen new friends within the week.

Oakbridge is populated mainly by craftsmen and middle-class merchants, and supports an incredible variety of shops ranging from general stores to shops that specialize in capes or juices. Assume that if the PCs require some mundane item or service, they can easily locate someone who sells it for standard price. The majority of the shops and stalls are located along Argent Street, with the owners and most employees living lower or higher in the same tower.

You may add additional descriptions to the shopkeepers and the residents as needed. In general, these characters are insignificant to the plot of this adventure. All of the important locations and NPCs in Oakbridge are detailed below.

1. Oakbridge Church

This elegant wood and metal building stands out among the masses of simple homes and shops with its beautiful stained glass windows and skillfully engraved walls. The facade shows righteous paladins defeating the powers of darkness.

The Oakbridge Church was built more than half a century ago by a rich and deeply religious member of House Cannith. The church and its surrounding plaza have served as Oakbridge's spiritual and cultural center ever since. **Loffer Magnulin** (LG male human cleric 4 [Silver Flame]) is the current caretaker of Oakbridge Church. He is considered stern and pious even by the high standards of the Church of the Silver Flame, and preaches to his flock that the kind of evil they must fear the most is not that of the infernal horrors but that of the indifference of good men. If the PCs can get past his constant preaching and criticizing, Loffer gladly aids them with divination and healing spells during their investigation. His initial attitude is indifferent toward adventurers, but if he can be made helpful, he gives the PCs a 20% discount off spells cast as long as they're hunting the murderer.

2. Bluebird Inn

A decorated wooden fence surrounds this large building. A sign above the door proclaims the place to be the "Bluebird Inn." Although simple in design, there is a certain rural charm to the inn that most city buildings lack.

The walls of this cozy little inn are painted in a bright, cheery blue. Anyone who asks about a good place to stay in Oakbridge is invariably sent here—it costs 8 sp a night to stay in the Bluebird, a price that includes both a hearty dinner and breakfast.

Graff Pendrong and his wife **Sarfina** run the inn. Their daughter **Mina** heads a staff of four barmaids (poor village girls who work for food and lodging), and their

Citizens of Oakbridge

This adventure features a large number of NPCs. The list below gives the names and roles of each NPC in this adventure, along with a short description of what a DC 15 Gather Information check reveals about the NPC.

NPC	Role	Gather Information result
Adrina	Bluebird Inn maid and waitress	"Quiet little girl, but dedicated to the job."
Borgo Delborde	Bluebird Inn's cook	"Bakes a mean meatpie. Definately a better cook than that blowhard Kroga."
Borlan Sigvar	Smith	"He's a great smith, but needs to ease back on the hate talk."
Chikor ir'Cronix	Wizard for hire	"I hear he used to be an adventurer!"
Corlina Herfast	Dancer at Bluebird Inn	"She's beautiful! Can't see how that thug Roctar got her to marry him!"
Drummer	Janitor for Bluebird Inn	"He may just be the janitor, but he's got some real skill with drums."
Graff Pendrong	Owner of Bluebird Inn	"He runs the Bluebird. Nice guy, if a bit too talkative."
Horken Pendrong	Son of Graff and Sarfina	"He's a bit slow-witted, but knows his horses."
Kroga Brax	Baker	"For a man who seems to hate everyone, he sure does make some tasty food."
Liandra ir'Cronfix	Chikor's wife	"Did you hear? Liandra's pregnant!"
Lofer Magnulin	Caretaker of Oakbridge Church	"He's the local cleric—he doesn't take guff from anyone!"
Lucian Cruzgar	Alchoholic artist and ex-soldier	"He scares me. Always talking about people he killed during the war."
Mina Pendrong	Daughter of Graff and Sarfina	"She's a little too shy and quiet to be the head waitress—being the owner's daughter must be nice."
Roctar Herfast	Retired wrestler and trainer	"I hear he still trains warriors. Not sure he deserves that pretty wife of his."
Sarfina Pendrong	Wife of Graff Pendrong	"She's the one that handles the Bluebird's finances."
Svans ir'Kilmansor	Art dealer	"Don't know much about him; he keeps to himself mostly."
Viduk	Sharn Watch sergeant	"He's a nice enough fellow, but not the sharpest knife in the drawer."
Volin Krober	Retired animal trainer and bard	"I hear he used to train dinosaurs for the circus! Not sure what he does for work these days, though."

son **Horken** tends the stables. The cooking is done by a dwarf named **Borgo Delborde** (see page 28)—his dishes are simple but quite palatable. Unfortunately for Borgo, he was also a member of the Peace Circus and is on Ziki's list. Ziki herself spends a fair amount of time here, in the shape of a human girl named Adrina. She works as one of the maids, and tries to avoid contact with the customers. **Lucian Cruzgar** (see page 33) spends a fair amount of time here as well, trying to drown his painful memories in cheep wine and gossip. He's overly fond of bragging about his kills during the war, and most of the other regulars tend to avoid his table out of fear that he might one day snap. One corner of the taproom has been converted into a stage. A beautiful elf woman named **Corlina** (see page 34) often dances here for the entertainment of the patrons, usually to the percussion of the warforged janitor **Drummer** (see page 29), who lives in the basement below.

Most of the adult population of Oakbridge spends their after-work hours in the Bluebird's taproom, and in their less-than-sober state they are more likely to be open, frank and talkative. Gather Information checks made here gain a +2 circumstance bonus. Unfortunately, asking questions about the murders here also attracts Ziki's attention, alerting her to the PCs' interest in her actions.

Ziki herself lives in an unimposing room two floors above the taproom, although she is rarely there since most of her time is spent working (during the day) or prowling the streets carrying out the night's murders. When she is here, she's usually asleep. A DC 25 Search of her room uncovers a cleverly hidden niche in the wall behind her bed's headboard. This niche contains a silver and darkwood portable shrine on which are arranged dozens of swaths of skin bearing a tattoo of a triangle with a beast's claw inside. A DC 20 Knowledge (local) or bardic knowledge check identifies this tattoo as the sign of the Peace Circus. When this adventure begins, Ziki has 52 skin patches here, and each is carefully preserved to prevent decomposition. Discovering this shrine in Ziki's room can be damning evidence, but only if the PCs can also prove that Ziki and the young girl Adrina are the same person.

3. Sigvar Smithy

This massive smithy is made solely of stone and steel. It stands on a large metallic platform that protects the wooden floor from flying embers. A large steel plate saying "The Gods made Iron but Man made Steel" hangs above the entrance.

Borlan Sigvar (CN male human expert 5, Craft [blacksmithing] +10) is a large and powerful man who lives above this simple workshop with his wife and four sons. Borlan is obsessed with stories about barbarians, and with his wild golden mane, great unkempt beard, and crude leather clothes, he looks like one himself. A quiet racist, he believes that just as there are superior and inferior types of metal, there are superior and inferior races. His initial attitude is friendly unless the group contains any elves, halflings, or half-elves, in which case his initial attitude is unfriendly. If the group consists only of these races, his initial attitude is hostile. He won't initiate an attack on such a group unless he feels he can get away with it.

Despite his intolerance, Borlan is a very talented blacksmith and his inexpensive but high-quality products are known not only in Oakbridge but throughout Northedge.

4. Chikor's Arcanary

This small townhouse is designed and decorated in an exotic and outlandish style uncharacteristic to the rather plain buildings elsewhere in Oakbridge. Eerie green lights and strange hummings filter through its dim windows. A large black plate above the entrance reads: "Chikor ir'Cronix: Wizard par excellence."

Chikor ir'Cronix (LN male human wizard 6) retired from the adventuring life after marrying a woman he rescued from gnoll slaver. His wife, **Liandra ir'Cronix** (NG female human commoner 2) is now pregnant with their first child. The house's modest interior is the exact opposite to its fancy exterior.

Chikor now makes his living casting spells for gold. His office is a small and unadorned room, bare except for a plain black table, two comfortable armchairs, and two bookshelves loaded with fiction and history books. A menu on the wall lists all of the spells he regularly provides: *comprehend languages, continual flame, darkvision, detect magic, detect poison, dispel magic, gentle repose, greater magic weapon, identify* (he typically prepares three each day), *Leomund's trap, read magic, prestidigitation*, and *whispering wind*. A second menu lists all other spells he knows but typically doesn't prepare: all other cantrips, *alarm, arcane lock, charm person, clairaudience/clairvoyance, daylight, deep slumber, detect secret doors, detect thoughts, detect undead, expeditious retreat, feather fall, fly, gaseous form, hold person, hold portal, hypnotism, invisibility, knock, levitate, locate object, resist energy, sleep, spider climb, tongues*, and *unseen servant*.

5. Lucian's Studio

This small and pathetic building seems about ready to collapse. Its bare, windowless walls are covered with signs of decay and negligence. Above the doorframe, in a crude, almost unintelligible handwriting, is written "Lucian's Studio." Black paint stains cover the fractured door and the soiled and unkempt porch rug. An awful smell of refuse comes from within.

Lucian Cruzgar may become one of the prime suspects in the murders. He spends increasingly little time here at his studio, which is bare except for an uncomfortable iron bed that stands in the middle of the room; his various belongings and many empty or broken bottles are strewn carelessly across the dusty and greasy floor. A dozen of his paintings hang on the walls—hauntingly beautiful but repugnantly violent depictions of apocalyptic battles of the Last War.

Treasure: Among the litter scattered on the floor lie several of Lucian's belongings, left here carelessly in his madness. These belongings consist of two *potions of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of bull's strength*, a masterwork composite shortbow (+2 Str), 16 masterwork arrows, and 4 large amethysts worth 150 gp apiece.

There is no evidence here that incriminates him in the murders.

6. Kroga's Bakery

This one-story building is painted in a pleasant yellow hue. An impressive assortment of cakes, breads, cookies and other delicacies lies behind a wide glass window. All around the bakery, the air is filled with marvelous sweet and pleasant smells. A large, painted plate with the words "Kroga's Bakery—Three Generations of Experience" hangs above the entrance.

Everything in this bakery seems to be constantly covered in a thin layer of flour, including an angry looking man in a stained white apron who stands behind the counter and does his poor best to look friendly. This man is **Kroga Brax** (CE male human commoner 2), one of Oakbridge's best bakers and angriest residents. Kroga Brax especially hates Borgo Delborde, the cook at the Bluebird Inn, seeing in him a dangerous rival in the baking arena. The locals don't treat Kroga's threats seriously since everyone knows the baker's a coward at heart. He beats his wife and daughter for the smallest mistakes, but the moment anyone stands up to him he backs down, simpers, and begs for mercy.

PART TWO: ZIKI'S WRATH

As this adventure beings, Ziki murders Svans and hurls his body from his balcony. After this killing, she continues to stalk and slay her victims over the course of a week. This part lists Ziki's murders and other events that take place throughout the adventure's six-day timeframe. Actions taken by the PCs can alter, delay, or even prevent some of these events. Other events only occur if certain situations come to pass.

The first six events detailed here are murders. Unlike the other events, a murder event generally takes place offstage, with the PCs arriving on the scene after the fact. Each murder is presented with a short description of how Ziki achieves her goal, followed by a list of clues that the PCs can gather relating to the murder, either at the crime scene or elsewhere in Oakbridge. Murders are timed—and if the PCs can catch Ziki or hide or protect a victim before the murder is scheduled to occur, they can save that victim from his or her fate. Of course, as long as Ziki remains at large, these murders are really only postponed—Ziki eventually figures out a way to reach all of her targets if she's not stopped.

Once the PCs discover that all of the murder victims were members of the Peace Circus and that the killer has been stripping them of their shared tattoos, a smart group gets word out to the public (or at the very least tries to find out if there are any other ex-carnies in Oakbridge). A DC 20 Gather Information check is enough to find out who these folk are. If the PCs stake out one of the homes of these folk, protect them, or otherwise make things difficult for Ziki to get to them, she bides her time and waits for a chance to strike, disrupting and altering the order of her murders as necessary but keeping Corlina as her final victim.

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For though a child of dire abuses,
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The very light I splice in bands.
When polished bright and cool as death,
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Murder 1. Svans ir'Klimansor (Day 1)

Svans ir'Klimansor (LG male human aristocrat 3) is a successful art dealer. He was also, several years ago, the manager of the Peace Circus, as a DC 25 Knowledge (local) check reveals. Svans never married and spent his declining days enjoying his extensive art collection and the company of his books. The others who once worked for him in the Peace Circus know he lives in the area, but none of them maintain relations with the man, since they all still on some level hold him partially responsible for the circus's bankruptcy. Svans has a fatal habit—he often leaves his front door unlocked.

Murder: Ziki enters Svans's apartment through his unlocked door on the evening of the first day of this adventure and finds him standing near the edge of his balcony, enjoying the sunset. She sneaks up to him and kills him with a single swift jab to the base of his neck with her dagger. After removing his circus tattoo, she pushes his body off the balcony—it lands on the walkway 20 feet below and immediately creates a scene. Ziki has no problem escaping out the window on the opposite side and down to the walkway below.

Clues: If the PCs are on the street when Svans's body hits, they can immediately examine it for clues. If, on the other hand, Viduk brings them into the investigation, they'll need to visit the Oakbridge Church to examine him. The body is cremated at noon on the second day. A DC 10 Search of Svans's body reveals that a small strip of skin has been flensed from his chest. A DC 15 Heal check establishes that the strip was removed just after the man's death. A DC 10 Heal check establishes the cause of death as head trauma from the fall, but a DC 20 Heal check reveals something more sinister—the man was, in fact, killed by a blow to the base of the neck with a sharp knife, likely a curved dagger.

Speak with dead cast on Svans's body reveals little since he was jumped from behind and never saw his killer. He also has no known enemies, and cannot explain why someone would want to kill him.

A search of Svans's home turns up two additional clues. With a DC 10 Search check, a spray of blood is found on his balcony. With a DC 20 Search check, a character uncovers a patch of baking flour on the floor by the wall in the living room near the balcony entrance. There is no other flour at all in the building. Ziki came directly up here to murder Svans after working a shift in the Bluebird Inn kitchen where she was baking bread. When she struck, some flour that had collected in a fold in her clothes spilled onto the floor.

If the PCs investigate Svans in an attempt to determine who may have wanted to kill him, a DC 15 Gather Information check establishes that he was well-liked, but that he didn't seem to have any real friends. No one but the other members of the Peace Circus know what was on the strip of skin removed from his chest, so unless the PCs are asking one of them, the residents of Oakbridge can't explain why a strip of his flesh was stolen.

Murder 2. Borgo Delborde (Day 2)

Borgo Delborde (LG male dwarf warrior 2/expert 2) works as a chef at the Bluebird Inn. Several years ago, he was the cook for the Peace Circus. Unusually friendly and cheerful for a dwarf, he is a popular and beloved figure in Oakbridge and a close friend of Drummer the warforged. Although he's Ziki's second victim, Borgo's body is likely the third or fourth to be discovered.

Murder: Ziki casts *spider climb* to climb up to Borgo's window three hours after sunset. She easily and silently opens the simple lock and enters the room, finding the dwarf asleep in his bed. She slits his throat, removes his tattoo and leaves the room the same way she entered. Borgo has day 3 off from work, and is not missed until day 4 of the adventure, when one of the Bluebird Inn's maids comes to his house to see if he's okay after he fails to arrive at work in the morning. This maid, a gnome girl named Lirana Borken, discovers his body and flees back to the inn to tell Graff Pendrong. News of Borgo's murder spreads quickly, and by late afternoon the PCs should hear of it if they haven't already discovered the dwarf's body on their own after seeking him out to question him about Drummer's murder on day 3.

Clues: A DC 20 search of Borgo's bedroom reveals the fact that the lock on his window was picked by someone quite skilled. In addition, small dots of flour can be found on the windowsill (again, Ziki came here from work and left traces of flour in her wake).

A character with Track who makes a DC 21 Search of his room and the wall under the window discovers scrapes that indicate someone clambered up the wall, through the window, and then retreated the same way.

An examination of Borgo's body reveals the fact that his throat has been cut. A DC 15 Heal check reveals the cut was likely from a curved knife. A patch of skin identical to the patch missing from Svans' body is missing from Borgo's chest. *Speak with dead* is relatively useless, since Borgo never woke before he was killed.

If the PCs ask around about Borgo, a DC 15 Gather Information check reveals that he was well-liked and hard working. His best friend was the warforged janitor Drummer. More importantly, anyone who knew Borgo also knows that Kroga Brax, a local baker, hated Borgo intensely. Most people assumed this hatred stemmed from jealousy over Borgo's greater skill at baking, and although no one would have believed Kroga capable of murder, once Borgo turns up dead, Kroga's name is the first to come to many tongues.

Witness: Corlina Herfast spends the early night with her lover Volin on the night Ziki murders Borgo. The window from Volin's bedroom provides a fairly good view of the window Ziki uses to enter Borgo's room, and Corlina sees the changeling exit Borgo's window but, at the time, is unsure what it is she sees. Additionally, reporting what she comes to believe is just another thief would reveal her adultery and likely enrage her short-tempered husband, so she remains silent until her husband is murdered on day 4.

Murder 3. Drummer (Day 3)

Drummer (N warforged expert 1) was rescued by Svans decades ago from

gang of racist dwarves that had attacked him. Svans gave the warforged a job in the Peace Circus as a drummer, and he proved so adept at this task that he took the profession as his name. After the Peace Circus went bankrupt, he followed Svans to Oakbridge and the man got him a job at the Bluebird Inn as a janitor. He lives in a small room in the inn's basement, and while many view Drummer as unfriendly and aloof, he in fact simply lacks the social skills needed to express himself. Those who take the time to get to know him know his skill with drums has not atrophied over the years.

Murder: Ziki originally intended to save Drummer's murder for just before Corlina's, but her success with Svans and Borgo makes her careless and she decides instead to kill him on the third day. Unable to sleep after Borgo's murder, she sneaks downstairs from her room an hour after midnight to the inn's basement. Having never attacked a warforged before, she is unsure if her dagger will do the trick and instead grabs an axe from the woodbox. She then sneaks into Drummer's room and finds the warforged sitting on a bench staring at a set of drums—warforged do not sleep. Unable to catch the warforged by surprise, a short but brutal battle erupts. Drummer lands a solid blow to the side of her head just before she kills him with the axe. The changeling continues to hack at his twitching body, unsure how much damage she needs to do to make sure the living construct was actually dead. Once Drummer is in pieces on the floor, she returns the axe to the woodbox, pries out a plate on his chest engraved with the Peace Circus rune, and returns quietly to her room upstairs. The thrill of the fight results in her making an error, though—as she flees the basement, she leaves a bloody handprint on the door.

Drummer's body is discovered at 10:00 a.m. the next morning when a maid comes downstairs to get more wine and sees the janitor's open door and the ruin beyond.

Clues: Drummer's body is in pieces—*speak with dead* is useless. A DC 15 Heal check is enough to establish his body was hacked apart with a large slashing weapon like an axe. If the PCs say they search the area for an axe, they'll find the one Ziki used for the job in the nearby woodbox bears direct indications that it was used for the deed. A DC 25 Search check reveals a missing plate from his torso that seems to have been pried loose after his death with a smaller blade.

A DC 15 Search of the room turns up droplets of dark blood here and there on the floor, as well as a bloody handprint on the door itself. The handprint is unique—it seems to have only three fingers. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Gather Information check reveals that the only resident of Oakbridge with three fingers is Lucian Cruzgar.

If the PCs ask around about Drummer, a DC 15 Gather Information check reveals that he kept to himself. The dwarven cook Borgo often spent time with Drummer in his basement apartment, and the two were apparently good friends. Of course, by the time Drummer is murdered, Borgo himself is already dead—the PCs may well be the ones to discover his body if they go to his house to inform him of his friend's death.

Murder 4. Roctar Herfast (Day 4)

Roctar Herfast (CN male human warrior 4) is a bodybuilder and a professional wrestler of some renown, now in late middle-age but unable to completely let go of his glory days. He worked as a strongman for the Peace Circus and amazed people with his feats of strength and his impressive figure. After the circus disbanded, he traveled with his wife Corlina to Sharn, where he worked as a warrior trainer for several years before retiring. Roctar is a rash and

fierce man and often threatens his wife with physical violence. To date, though, he's never actually hurt her and always apologizes later for his outbursts.

Murder: Ziki comes to Roctar and Corlina's home an hour after sundown and finds the retired strongman exercising in his living room. She creeps up behind him and stabs him in the back. Roctar crumples to the ground, dying. Ziki leans over him, sees he still lives, and feeling the urge to make sure Roctar knows why he's dying, she murmurs "revenge" into his ear. He reaches up to grab at her, gets only a handful of hair, and as Ziki pulls away with ease she slices his tattoo from his chest before cutting his throat, then slips back out into the night. His body is discovered a few minutes later by his wife, Corlina, who reports it to the Watch and then flees to Volin's home to seek comfort in her lover's arms.

Clues: Any search of Roctar's body automatically reveals a stab wound to the back, a slashed throat, and a missing patch of skin on the chest. A DC 22 Search check reveals a few long, pale hairs clenched in one of his hands. The hairs seem to change color slightly as one turns them over and examines them. A DC 15 Knowledge (local) check reveals the fact that the hairs came from a changeling.

Roctar's body is likely the first the PCs discover that can actually divulge some solid information via a *speak with dead*. He can describe Ziki's true form and her unique-looking dagger. With the right questions, the PCs can learn she whispered "revenge" into his ear and skinned his tattoo before she killed him.

Murder 5. Volin Krober (Day 5)

Volin Krober (CG male elf bard 3/ranger 2/expert 2) is a talented bard, a skilled fencer, and an expert animal trainer—his specialty is dinosaur training. He joined the Peace Circus after his entire village was slaughtered by platoon of warforged soldiers during the Last War. His greatest success (and his greatest failure) was the capture and taming of two deinonychuses he named Kaiwakit and Panch. He met Corlina at the Peace Circus, and although she was already married to Roctar, the two fell in love. They met in clandestine meetings late at night, keeping their affair secret from everyone. But as their trysts grew more heated, Volin's attention to Kaiwakit and Panch lessened, and when the dinosaurs grew sick he failed to notice. Driven insane by the sickness, the deinonychuses went berserk one fateful day. Volin has since learned to forgive himself for the accident, but still wakes in the middle of the night once or twice a year with a start, convinced that someone, or something, is nearby, waiting to kill him. On day five of this adventure, his dreams come true.

Murder: Ziki picks the lock to Volin's house and sneaks up to Volin's bedroom. She does not expect to find him awake, nor with company. For a few seconds, Ziki regards Volin and Corlina with shock. When Corlina screams, Volin leaps out of bed, snatches up his rapier and attacks Ziki. The resulting battle is tough—Volin is easily Ziki's match in a straight-up duel. Ziki manages to retreat to another room of the house and hides. Volin and Corlina try to escape while Ziki uses a scroll of *summon nature's ally V* to summon a pair of deinonychuses. The dinosaurs leap on Volin as he and Corlina stagger out onto the street. As the summoned animals tear into Volin, Corlina manages to escape. Ziki, badly wounded in the battle, carves off Volin's tattoo after he is slain by the dinosaurs and then limps back to her room at the Bluebird Inn, climbing up the back alley wall and entering her room via the window to avoid running into anyone who might notice her bloody clothes and wounded body.

Clues: Volin's body is torn apart. A DC 15 Heal check reveals he was slain by something with powerful talons and teeth—a DC 14 Knowledge (nature) check identifies the killer as a deinonychus. His body is too savaged for a *speak with dead* to work properly.

It's possible to track Ziki back to the Bluebird if the PCs get to the scene of the murder quickly enough. The murder happens an hour after sunset when there aren't many people on the street. It's initially a DC 10 Survival check to track Ziki's bloody footprints back to the Bluebird. This DC increases by 1 every 10 minutes that pass as foot traffic begins to obscure the tracks.

Witnesses: Corlina was in bed with Volin when Ziki arrived, and recognized her as the changeling woman who was attacked by Kaiwakit and Panch so many years ago. In addition, one of Volin's neighbors, an insomniac named Rotgar Bovar, saw a naked female elf running away from Volin's home. He recognized her as "that pretty elf that dances at the Bluebird sometimes," and heard the sounds of a fight on the street below. He was the first to arrive at the murder scene, but by that point the deinonychuses had vanished and Ziki was already gone.

Murder 6. Corlina Herfast (Day 6 or thereafter)

Ziki's final victim is Corlina Herfast, the person she most directly blames for the tragedy that ruined her life. Ziki believes that Corlina seduced Volin and lured him away from his responsibilities to his dinosaurs, and thus created the situation that culminated in her child's death and her own maiming.

Murder: It's likely that the PCs stop Ziki before she gets this far, or at the very least, take steps to protect Corlina. Yet Ziki is patient. She waits for her opportunity to strike, keeping an eye on Corlina from the vantage point of ever-changing disguises. Eventually, she'll get a chance to strike, cutting Corlina's throat, stripping her of her tattoo, and leaving a short note on parchment pinned to her body and addressed to the PCs.

"It has been fun playing cat and mouse with you, but now I have to leave. Don't mourn the dead. Believe me, they more than deserved death. I am sure you will agree that their fates are fitting punishment for the murder of an innocent child. I hope we never meet again. I would hate to rob the world of such courageous adventurers as yourselves. With great respect—Ziki"

The Investigation

As the murders accumulate, the PCs should feel increasing time pressure. With

a bit of investigation, deductive reasoning, and a dash of luck, they should be able to catch up to Ziki before she kills everyone on her list. Since the course and nature of the investigation depends wholly on the PCs (and what clues they find), there is no set list of events that occur at specific times. The events detailed below are, for the most part, instigated by player actions, and can take place at any time once the PCs trigger them.

Once the PCs get a reliable description of Ziki or obtain of some of her hair or other belongings, *scrying* becomes the best bet for locating the murderer. It's likely that the PCs can't cast this spell, but Sharn's a big city, and paying someone to scry on Ziki is a fairly simple task. A sorcerer or wizard's standard price for *scrying* is 380 gp, a cleric's is 460 gp, a druid's is 280 gp, and a bard's is 310 gp.

If the PCs manage to scry on Ziki (remember, she gets a Will save to resist), they probably end up scrying on her while she works or sleeps at the Bluebird Inn, in which case they view her in her disguise as the human girl Adrina. Only if they happen to scry on the changeling within a half-hour of one of her murders do they have a chance of catching her in her true form.

"Murder in Oakbridge" gives characters with the Investigate feat a chance to shine. When a character with this feat makes a Search check to find a clue at any of the murder scenes, you should give that character an additional clue. They should be more obscure than those detailed in the murder scenes above, but should still point the PCs in the right direction. These additional clues can also give the PC hints about Ziki's capabilities, not just her identity. For example, the nature of the wounds might allow the character to realize that the killer has levels of rogue, or that the wounds were caused by a light *human bane* weapon.

Event 1: The Surly Baker

One of the earliest clues the PCs might find at the murder scenes are traces of baking flour. This clue likely sends the PCs to Kroga's Bakery to interrogate the surly baker. Once Borgo is murdered, Kroga becomes an even more plausible suspect, since the baker has a long-established and publicly known hatred of his competition.

Of course, Kroga is not a murderer, but his attitude and quick temper are no ally to his actual innocence. Kroga's initial attitude against the characters is unfriendly. He screams and curses and threatens the PCs once he realizes they suspect he's a killer, but if the PCs can adjust his attitude to at least friendly he calms down. Alternately, any successful attack against the coward is enough to secure his cooperation.

Kroga

Kroga's wife Kelinda maintains that he was home during any of the murders that have already happened, but a DC 20 Sense Motive check reveals that she seems nervous and might be lying to cover things up for Kroga. This isn't actually the case—she's nervous because Kroga's a violent man and she hopes that by stepping forward with an alibi for her husband she'll save herself and her children a beating.

If the PCs explain that baking flour was found at the murder scene, Kroga demands to see a sample. The flour Ziki accidentally left at the murder scenes is run of the mill, while the flour Kroga uses is of a higher quality. He points this out immediately, and a DC 12 Profession (cook) check is enough to confirm his claim.

Of course, ultimate proof of Kroga's innocence comes after the murders continue even if he is locked up or killed.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs realize Kroga is a false lead, award them experience as if they had defeated a CR 3 creature in combat.

Event 2: The Three-Fingered Maniac (EL 6)

Another likely suspect for the killings is Lucian Cruzgar. His foul attitude and ready glee in recounting his deadly skills during the Last War mark him from his first meeting with the PCs as a violent man perfectly capable of performing the crimes. When Ziki leaves a handprint on Drummer's door, the fact that both this handprint and Lucian's hand have three fingers seems to be a lock for his guilt.

Before the war, Lucian was a tall and handsome young man with dark, mysterious features and an impressive masculine frame. However, the eight years he spent fighting in the Last War and his excessive drinking have had a drastic effect on his appearance. Today, Lucian looks like an old and tired man with unhealthy yellow eyes, wrinkled pale skin and a strange, dazed expression. His posture is bent and broken, and his web-like hair and unkempt beard are streaked with gray. However, something of his old pride and power remain, making him a very frightening person to be around. He always wears his old and filthy uniform and his excellent swords. His speech is slow and almost incomprehensible. Lucian is covered in scars and burns and his right hand is missing two fingers.

Lucian spent his youth on the battlefield. While his friends stayed home, went to school, fell in love, and started families,

Lucien killed. He was a loyal and ruthless soldier—he knew in his heart he was doing the right thing, and when the war finally ended he returned home to Sharn expecting to be hailed as a hero. Instead he learned that his parents had passed away and that his home had been confiscated. All his childhood "friends" had forgotten him or abandoned him. All he had were his prized swords and armor. He tried his hand at many jobs, but no one wanted to employ the angry and violent veteran. To ease his pain and shame, Lucian began drinking. Once he started, he couldn't stop. He earned some money by selling the pictures he painted from time to time and bought a small studio in Oakbridge.

Lucian is not yet completely lost. If a PC befriends the tormented man (not an easy task) and helps him through his alcoholism and mental problems, he can gain a sturdy ally and friend—possibly even a cohort down the road.

If the PCs take the time to examine Lucien's maimed hand, a DC 15 Search check is enough to establish the fact that his hand is much larger than the one that left the print on the door. Unfortunately, getting the chance to examine Lucian this carefully is difficult. He makes a Sense Motive check, opposed by the result of the PCs' Search checks. If Lucian makes his check, he realizes he's being examined and takes offense. Likewise, if the PCs come right out and accuse him of murder he takes offense. And once Lucian is offended, things turn ugly.

Lucian may not be the one behind the murders, but he is still quite insane. He partially believes that agents of the Emerald Claw are still after him to murder him for his great prowess during the Last War. Once he realizes the PCs suspect him of murder, he thinks they're these agents, come to frame him for murders he didn't commit, take him away to a dark room, and finish the job.

At this point, Lucian attacks. As soon as combat begins, Lucian slips instantly back into the mindset of a trained killer. He focuses his rage on the PCs and tries to kill them before they can do the same to him.

Lucian Cruzgar **CR 6**

Male human fighter 4/ranger 2
CN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15
hp 47 (6 HD)
Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0

Spd 30 ft.
Melee +1 *longsword* +11 (1d8+6/19–20) or +1 *longsword* +9/+4 (1d8+6/19–20) and +1 *shortsword* +8 (1d6+2/19–20)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9
Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack

Abilities Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12
Feats Cleave, Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Track, Two-Weapon Figthting, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

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Skills Craft (painting) +6, Intimidate +8, Listen +5, Spot +5
Possessions *+1 chain shirt, +1 longsword, +1 shortsword*

Event 3: A Frightened Witness

Corlina catches a glimpse of Ziki as she leaves Borgo's home, and as the murders in Oakbridge pile up, she realizes that someone may well be targeting ex-members of the Peace Circus. After her husband is murdered, Corlina seeks out comfort in her lover's home. The PCs won't find her if they seek her at her home; a DC 20 Gather Information check is enough to uncover rumors that she's having an affair with Volin Krober.

If the PCs find Corlina, she immediately breaks down and tells them everything she knows. Use this event to bail the PCs out if they simply haven't had any luck cracking the case, but don't give them too much information. Corlina knows who Ziki is and has a good idea why she's killing people, but she has no idea where to find the changeling.

Corlina is a beautiful woman, even by the high elven standards. She has high cheek-bones, flowing blonde hair worn in intricate braids, kind and lively green eyes, and a perfect feminine figure. Her movements are infused with the swiftness and grace of a cat and the precision and nobility of an experienced dancer. Adopted and raised by the streets of Vethirond after her parents were killed in the war, Corlina made a living on thievery and street performances. One day she met a handsome and virile man named Roctar, who was at the time recruiting for the Peace Circus. Roctar saw Corlina's potential as a dancer and hired her on the spot. The impressionable elf repaid him for rescuing her from a life as a vagrant by marrying him. Yet during her circus years, she fell in love with Volin, an affair that would eventually contribute to the tragedy that ruined everything.

Corlina's dazzling acrobatic performances and dances were characterized by both breathtaking feats of dexterity and an elegant artistic streak. After the Circus disbanded, she traveled with her husband to Sharn where she soon renewed her romantic relationship with Volin.

In contrast to her striking appearance, Corlina is actually a rather dull and meek person. She

Lucian

isn't too bright and is almost completely uneducated—although she is very friendly and talkative, she has very little of real import to say to anyone. Corlina has only a few friends but is very loyal to them. She has slowly grown to hate her husband Roctar, but her fear of his rage and the shame of a divorce has so far kept her by his side.

In combat, Corlina tries to escape using Tumble to avoid attacks of opportunity. If running away is impossible she tries to avoid the aggressor's blows using the full-defense action for as long as possible. She fights back only if she's cornered.

CORLINA HERFAST **CR 2**
Female elf expert 3
CG Medium humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Common, Elven

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 10
hp 13 (3 HD)
Immune sleep
Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk dagger +3 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +6 (1d4/19–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 15
Feats Acrobatic, Agile
Skills Balance +13, Escape Artist +5, Jump +10, Perform (dance) +8, Sleight of Hand +9, Tumble +11
Possessions courtier's outfit, masterwork dagger, silver necklace worth 65 gp, silver wedding ring worth 50 gp, pearl earrings worth 100 gp

Event 4: A Mother's Rage

Ziki is likely to learn of the PCs long before they learn about her. She keeps abreast of what they know about her crimes, either by listening in to their conversations at the Bluebird Inn or by utilizing Gather Information. As long as she remains convinced that the PCs don't know who she is, she leaves them alone.

Ziki's natural form is tall and graceful with long white hair and a shapely figure. Her face is not unpleasant or as alien as most changeling faces tend to be. Because Ziki's left hand is covered in dreadful scars and two fingers are missing, she always wears a pair of black gloves to hide her maimed hand. Her white eyes have a red hue from all the hours she's spent crying.

Ziki's dagger is shaped exactly like the gutting talon of a deinonychus. She ordered it from a famous weaponsmith with the intention of seeing it plunged into her enemies' bodies, just like the dinosaurs' talons were plunged into her gentle daughter's throat so many years ago.

Ziki's life is wrought from tragedy. Although she's a very talented thief and burglar, she never saw "the big money" because of her lack of contacts in the underworld. Her husband, a young and arrogant enforcer, was arrested and was given a choice: to endure seven years of forced labor or to go to the Cyrian front. He picked the latter and never came back. While still mourning the death of her husband, another disaster struck. Her only child was torn to ribbons by a "tamed" dinosaur during a circus show and Ziki was severely wounded. After a lifetime of failures, disappointments and tragedies, this was the final straw. She resolved then and there that those careless carnies who took her daughter away would pay dearly...

Ziki is bitter and moody. She does her best to look into the future but all she sees is her shattered life and all the good things that should have happened but never did. She often sobs for no apparent reason, and almost never smiles. Nightmares and memories of her dead daughter and husband constantly haunt her, making both her days and her nights equally unbearable.

If she suspects the PCs are on to her, she still doesn't resort to open combat. Instead, she poisons their drinks (an easy task if the PCs are still staying at the Bluebird Inn and they haven't discovered she works there in the guise of a human maid) with dark reaver powder (DC 18 Fort save, initial damage 2d6 Con, secondary damage 1d6 Con + 1d6 Str). She doesn't expect she'll kill many PCs this way, but she does hope to send them a message.

The PCs may wish to speak with Ziki in her Adrina guise at some point, perhaps as they interrogate the employees of the Bluebird Inn after Borgo or Drummer are murdered. In this case, she gladly speaks with them. She tries to shift suspicion on to Lucian, talking about how he once showed her his magic swords and claimed that he killed far more people than his commanding officers knew.

If the PCs realize that Adrina and Ziki are the same, they may try to arrest her while she is in human form. In this case, Adrina tries to escape, using her skills to lead the PCs on a frantic chase through the streets of Sharn. Her favored mode of escape is to lose herself in a crowd or duck around a corner and then change shape into a different form to throw off pursuit. Ziki's not above leaping off a walkway or bridge to get away, since she has a *ring of feather fall* to slow her descent. Of course, she tries to double back to her room as soon as she can to gather her belongings; if the PCs act quickly, they might be able to ambush her there when she returns. Ziki is a cagy woman. She approaches her room in the form of a human man dressed as a city guard, and claims to have been sent by the watch to gather up the suspect's gear as evidence.

If captured, Ziki tries one last time to convince the PCs that she's innocent, using Bluff checks. If left alone, she tries again to escape. Only once all other options are played out does she resort to violence, since she is loath to reveal her hand before her vengeance is complete.

In combat, Ziki is as efficient as she is deadly. She focuses her attacks on humans, using her +1 *human bane dagger* and sneak attacks gained from Improved Feint as she can. If she's clearly outmatched, she tries to escape, hide, and uses one of her scrolls of *summon nature's ally V* to call up 1d3 deinonychuses to send at the party. If brought below 10 hit points, she tries to escape. Ziki does not fight to the death, and if escape is impossible she begs for mercy, hoping that her tragic tale might touch someone's heart.

Corlina

Ziki **CR 8**

Female changeling rogue 8

CN Medium humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +5

Languages Common, Elven, Halfling

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14; improved uncanny dodge

hp 38 (8 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +9, **Will** +1 (+2 vs. sleep and charm); evasion

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 *human bane dagger* +10/+5 (1d4+1/19–20)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +6

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, sneak attack +4d6

Combat Gear 3 *potions of cure light wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, 2 *scrolls of summon nature's ally V*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 14

SQ minor change shape, trap sense +2, trapfinding

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +15, Climb +11, Decipher Script +7, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +13 (+15 acting), Gather Information +13, Hide +19, Intimidate +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +14,

Ziki

Open Lock +14, Spot +5, Sense Motive +6, Use Magic Device +13 (+15 scrolls)

Possessions *+1 human bane dagger, +1 shadow studded leather, ring of feather fall,* 7 vials of dark reaver powder, 50 foot silk rope with grappling hook, masterwork thieves' tools, 72 gp

Minor Change Shape (Su) Changelings can alter their appearance as though using a *disguise self* spell that affects their bodies but not their possessions. This ability is not an illusory effect, but a minor physical alteration of a changeling's facial features, skin color and texture, and size, within the limits described for the spell. A changeling can use this ability at will, and the alteration lasts until she changes shape again. A changeling reverts to her natural form when killed. A *true seeing* spell reveals her natural form. When using this ability to create a disguise, a changeling receives a +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. Using this ability is a full-round action.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs prevent Ziki from finishing her grim business without killing her (perhaps by forcing her to flee Sharn), the changeling lies low for several months and hones her skills before she returns and tries again to finish the job. She bears no ill will to the PCs, but makes sure they're occupied elsewhere before she starts killing again. In this case, Corlina may contact the PCs with a desperate message to call them back for help.

If the PCs kill Ziki, they'll need to prove to the watch that she was indeed the murderer. The shrine and collection of tattoo patches she hid in her room at the Bluebird Inn serves as proof. If turned over to the law, Ziki is quickly found guilty and executed unless the PCs take mercy on her and argue in her defense. Ziki's trial can be an exciting affair, with her barrister trying to prove her innocence or pleading for insanity, while the prosecutor tries to portray Ziki as an evil and cold-blooded killer who must pay for her atrocious crimes. Of course, the PCs' testimony and the evidence that they have gathered should decide the outcome of Ziki's trial. The best she can hope for is exile or being branded as an outlaw. Given time and friendship, she may even come to repent for her actions.

If the PCs were working for Viduk and the Sharn Watch, the warforged proves good to his word and sees that the PCs are rewarded for their work, as promised. The Sharn Watch doesn't want to encourage vigilantes, but they turn a blind eye when the citizens of Oakbridge collect a reward of 1,250 gp for the party as thanks for delivering their community from Ziki's wrath if they were working on their own.

Uri Kurlianchik is an Israeli soldier from Rehovot who spends his days playing D&D, reading fantasy literature and generally being useless. He would like to give special thanks to Jonathan Bord and Maria Dyshel for their helpful suggestions and honest criticism and to Mark Pinski for helping him with the maps. Thanks, guys!

Adapting the Adventure

Adapting "Murder in Oakbridge" to different campaigns is a fairly simple process. Simply place Oakbridge district into any large metropolis. Instead of the central street connecting two adjacent towers, Oakbridge itself becomes a span over a fast-running river or a deep chasm. If you don't use changelings in your campaign, Ziki should become an elf with a *hat of disguise*. If you don't use warforged, Drummer and other warforged characters should be turned into half-orcs or a similar minority race with a history of being outcasts. The deinonychuses can be exotic animals from a distant land, or if you don't have dinosaurs in your campaign, they can be replaced with any other animal from the *summon nature's ally IV* list (such as brown bears, giant crocodiles, dire apes, dire boars, dire wolverines, Huge vipers, or tigers).

Scaling the Adventure

"Murder in Oakbridge" is designed for a group of four 5th-level characters, but it can be adapted for use by 3rd–4th-level characters with relative ease. Simply adjust the levels of NPCs encountered down by 1 or 2, and lower the DCs for the various skill checks to find clues by 1 or 2 points. Replace Ziki's *summon nature's ally V* scroll with a *summon nature's ally IV* scroll; she summons only one deinonychus with the scroll in this case. Consider expanding Ziki's murder schedule by a few days to give the PCs a little more time to unravel the mystery.

Joachim '05

AGE OF WORMS

A GATHERING OF WINDS

When the PCs return to Diamond Lake to consult with their friend Allustan, they find the town in shambles and Allustan missing. Locals tell tales of a terrible dragon's rampage through town. Unfortunately for the characters, the dragon is only the beginning.

"A Gathering of Winds" is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure designed for four 11th-level characters. It is also the sixth installment of the Age of Worms Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures, several "Backdrop" articles to help Dungeon Masters run the series, and a handful of poster maps of key locations. For additional aid in running this campaign, check out DRAGON's monthly "Wormfood" articles, a series that provides additional material to help players survive this campaign. Your PCs should hit 12th level at some point in this adventure, at which point those who have studied the cult of Kyuss and read through the *Apostolic Scrolls* they recovered in "The Champion's Belt" may qualify for the wormhunter prestige class, a highly customizable five-level prestige class detailed in DRAGON #338's "Wormfood." Finally, you can head online to paizo.com to download "Age of Worms Overload," a free PDF that includes details on the hinterlands surrounding Diamond Lake, stat blocks for nearly everyone in town, and provides a detailed outline of the entire Age of Worms Adventure Path.

Of course, you can also run "A Gathering of Winds" as a stand-alone adventure, or even as part of a campaign of your own design.

BY WOLFGANG BAUR
BY JOACHIM BARRUM, STEVE PRESCOTT, AND EVA WIDERMANN
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI
AGE OF WORMS CALLIGRAPHY BY DARLENE

ADVENTURE PATH | MID-LEVEL (6TH–12TH) | DUNGEON CRAWL

PLAYTESTERS: CLINT GOLDSCHMIDT, SEAN PAYNE, ERIC ANDERSON, GREG VAUGHAN, TED ALBERT

Adventure Background

In ages long past, before the rise of elves, dwarves, or humans, the legendary Wind Dukes of Aaqa ruled a vast empire, bringing Law and elemental magic to many barbaric worlds. Air and lightning powered the their magic, and their ties to the Plane of Elemental Air were very strong. In time, they mastered other elements as well, and as they grew more and more powerful, dozens of other elemental and lawful races swore fealty to them, from the lofty djinn and the proud salamanders to the least of the mud sorcerer cults and the inevitables, servants of the Wind Dukes. At its peak, the empire of the Wind Dukes comprised most of the elemental planes, from the oceanic palaces of the marid to the City of Brass. The Inner Planes were harmonious, united under one rule, and their civilization thrived—until forces led by the demonic Queen of Chaos rallied slaad, demons, and others against them.

The fight against the Queen of Chaos was long and relentless, and it culminated in the Battle of Pesh. The Wind Dukes won a pyrrhic victory there—the loss of so many of their greatest leaders (including the great Wind Duke General Icosiol) weakened their hold on not only the Material Plane but the Inner Planes as well. Over time, their elemental allies drifted away, and more realms were sealed from the planar byways.

The decline of the Wind Dukes took centuries. In that time, they built enormous tombs to honor their dead, choosing sites on the Material Plane near to where they fell as the locations of their eternal rest. One of the greatest of these tombs was that of Icosiol, the general who defeated the Queen of Chaos and her lackey, Miska the Wolf Spider. Icosiol used a potent artifact called the *Rod of Law* to cast them into the outer darkness. This great victory came at a significant cost, for the *Rod of Law* fragmented to become the *Rod of Seven Parts*, and Icosiol himself was slain in the final battle. Millennia later, the Wind Dukes have passed into legend, and this tomb still remains hidden under the Fields of Pesh, its entrance concealed hundreds of miles to the south behind a collapsed section of tomb for another Wind Duke (Zosiel, slayer of the demon Kizarvidexus) known today as the Whispering Cairn.

Adventrue Synopsis

This adventure begins with the PCs' return to Diamond Lake. They find the miserable town in much worse shape than they left it, for a powerful black dragon has come to town and destroyed several buildings. When the PCs seek out Allustan, they find his house leveled, but his body is nowhere to be found. After investigating, the PCs discover that Allustan has been spending a lot of time in the Whispering Cairn, and that no one's seen him since a few days before the dragon attack. In fact, Allustan has uncovered a portal from the Whispering Cairn to the distant but magnificent tomb of Icosiol, deep under what were once known as the Fields of Pesh.

The dragon responsible for the town's plight is Ilthane, a minion of the great undead dragon Dragotha. Arriving in Diamond Lake to avenge the disruption of her machinations in the Mistmarsh (see "Encounter at Blackwall Keep" in *Dungeon* #126), Ilthane sought to slay Allustan for his meddling before moving on to track down the PCs themselves. She assaulted Diamond Lake but found the mage missing. After devastating the town, she learned from captured citizens that Allustan had traveled north to investigate a cairn. Ilthane ambushed him as he emerged, but was unable to slay the wizard, who retreated back into Icosiol's tomb in search of an item he could use to defeat the dragon.

When the PCs arrive at the Whispering Cairn, they find Ilthane waiting for them and must defeat the dragon if they wish to enter the cairn. After overcoming Ilthane, the PCs can pass through a strange black oval into Icosiol's Tomb—unexplored until Allustan entered it the day before and eventually became the victim of one of its numerous traps. Designed long ago to honor the renowned warrior Icosiol, the tomb's deepest chamber also protects a fragment of the fabled *Rod of Seven Parts*, a potent magical artifact.

The Wind Dukes lavished the tomb with traps and guardians. Many chambers hold potential deathtraps or an encounters with unusual monsters, all designed to protect that single item—and the memory of the Wind Duke's ancient triumph.

Adventure Hooks

After "The Champion's Belt" the PCs learn that their contact in the Free City, the sage Eligos, has been murdered. Before he was killed, he collected his notes on the nature of the Age of Worms in a small box; attached to the box is a short note.

"My dear friend Allustan—What your adventurers have stumbled into sickens me to my soul. Every new leaf I turn reveals an even darker secret. Here are my notes. You must take them to our one-time master—although I fear that even he may be ill-equipped for what writhes in all of our futures. Until then..."

The note is unfinished. The contents of the box consist of several books about apocalypse cults, undead, and ancient history, along with any discoveries that the PCs may have given Eligos. The PCs should seek Allustan and deliver this box of research to him. If they don't, word of a dragon attack on Diamond Lake may convince them to return to their old stomping grounds.

If you're running "A Gathering Of Winds" on its own, Allustan instead becomes a local wizard who became trapped in Icosiol's Tomb. The PCs may have arrived in Diamond Lake with a need to speak with the wizard. Alternately, one of the PCs could have heard rumors of a new cairn's discovery near Diamond Lake. Research indicates that this cairn may in fact be a doorway to an even greater ancient tomb.

PART ONE: RETURN TO DIAMOND LAKE

In the time between the third and sixth adventures, while the player characters have been strutting around the Free City, Allustan has examined and explored the remaining secrets of the Whispering Cairn. He suspected that a powerful artifact was buried somewhere inside, and

hopes that this artifact may prove valuable against current-day enemies.

Over time, Allustan performed a series of excavations and experiments with certain dead-ends and interdimensional elements of the dungeon, most notably the collapsed passage near the entrance (area 3 in "The Whispering Cairn"). Allustan summoned elemental creatures to help him excavate that passage, and in so doing uncovered a long-hidden chamber with a strange portal. A slave to curiosity, Allustan passed through the portal and discovered Icosiol's Tomb on the other side. He explored a few rooms, but realized he needed to gather more gear before venturing further. He returned to the Whispering Cairn, intending to retrieve supplies from his home in Diamond Lake, but was ambushed by Ilthane upon exiting the cairn. Allustan retreated back to Icosiol's Tomb. He became trapped by one of the tomb's wards not long after.

A Town In Ruin

When the PCs return to Diamond Lake, they find the town in much worse shape than when they left—Ilthane has destroyed several buildings and left the entire town in chaos and fear. The following notes apply to the map of Diamond Lake and the Backdrop article that appeared in *Dungeon* #124.

Ruined Buildings: Allustan's home has been destroyed, as has the Emporium. Several of the unlabeled buildings between these two structures are also gone. All of them appear to be partially crushed in places, and in others melted. Sections of ground are scarred and barren from blasts of acid, including a large black swath in the middle of the town square. Feel free to have several other buildings in town destroyed as well.

Dead or Missing: The sage Allustan is missing and presumed dead. Everyone in town assumes that, by now, the dragon has found and killed him—Ilthane made no secret of the fact that he was the one she was looking for. Several of the Emporium's employees have left town, including Shag Solomon (whom the PCs will meet again in "The Prince of Redhand"), while others have sought shelter at other establishments in town. Several citizens were slain in the dragon's attack, and now the survivors cower in their homes. Feel free to add any NPCs that the PCs know to the list of the dead as you see fit.

The Heroes Return: Not long after the PCs arrive in town, they are approached by a group of guards from the garrison. These guards recognize the PCs on sight, and beseech them to slay the dragon that has come to town. They describe the dragon as a 30-foot-long black monster with a devastating acid breath weapon. Allustan's home was the first thing the dragon destroyed, and it moved on from there in a rage, smashing houses left and right until it reached the town square. The creature then began gathering wounded victims in the square and demanded Allustan's location. A dozen people were killed before someone was able to answer the dragon—Allustan had been spending his time of late at the Whispering Cairn. The dragon secured directions to the now infamous local tomb, then flew off to the north.

This was three days ago. The townsfolk have been living every day since in fear that the dragon could return at any moment. No one knows why the dragon is after Allustan, or where it came from, only that no one in town could withstand its fury.

If you're playing the Age of Worms as a campaign, you should take some time now to let the PCs interact with the townsfolk. They may wish to catch up with old friends, torment old enemies, or otherwise wrap up loose ends left over from their prior adventures in Diamond Lake. Eventually, they should head up to the Whispering Cairn to find out what happened to Allustan, who hasn't been seen in town since the day before the dragon attack.

The Whispering Cairn (EL 13)

The black dragon Ilthane had already planned to assault the PCs for ruining her plans to infect the Twisted Branch lizardfolk (see "Encounter at Blackwall Keep"). When agents of the Ebon Triad based in Alhaster contacted her and asked her to track down the PCs and their mentor Allustan and kill them in reciprocation for their acts against the Ebon Triad cell based under Diamond Lake, she agreed readily. The payments in gold and magic the Triad promised her were almost an afterthought. Ilthane traveled south to Diamond Lake, intending to slay Allustan and then move on to the PCs, but found the wizard wasn't at home. When she learned he'd spent the last few days in the Whispering Cairn, Ilthane ambushed the wizard that night as he emerged from the tomb, wounding him greatly before he managed to escape. For the last few days, Ilthane has bided her time, resting and recovering from her wounds and waiting patiently for Allustan to emerge from the Cairn. She knows Allustan can't yet cast *teleport*, but has started to wonder if he might have escaped via some other route when the PCs arrive in the area.

Creature: The reduction of Ilthane's glorious hunt to a drawn-out wait outside a glorified mousehole wasn't what the dragon pictured when she took this job. She's a bit impatient and more than a little annoyed at the failure of her first venture into killing-for-hire. She's also smart enough to be wary of the PCs, and she prefers to attack on ground of her own choosing. Ilthane considers the area around the Whispering Cairn open enough for an aerial assault, and free of the complications that would accompany an attack in or near the town of Diamond Lake. She has memorized the terrain and awaits her opportunity. A party in disguise offering to help her "get the wizard out of the tunnel" might secure Ilthane's cooperation, but it would require quite a good Bluff check (opposing Ilthane's +21 Sense Motive check).

Ilthane is a bit more dangerous than the average adult black dragon. She's a gifted alchemist, and under Dragotha's tutelage has developed several potent elixirs that infuse the living with draconic power. The PCs may have already tangled with some of the results of Ilthane's elixirs (several of the lizardfolk and kobolds from "Encounter at Blackwall Keep" were augmented in this manner). Now, they'll be confronted with

the results of her greatest discoveries—elixirs she has used on herself to gain persistent enhancement bonuses to her ability scores, immunity to poison, and a dangerous augmentation to her breath weapon.

ILTHANE THE BLACK **CR 13**
Female adult black dragon
CE Large dragon (water)
Init +1; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses, low-light vision; Listen +16, Spot +20
Aura frightful presence (DC 20, 180 ft., HD 18 or fewer)
Languages Common, Draconic, Aquan

AC 29, touch 10, flat-footed 28
hp 218 (19d12+95 HD); **DR** 5/magic
Immune acid, paralysis, poison, sleep
SR 18
Fort +16, **Ref** +12, **Will** +12

Spd 60 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.
Melee* bite +20 (3d6+13) and 2 claws +17 (1d8+9) and 2 wings +17 (1d6+9) and tail slap +17 (1d8+16)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with bite)
Base Atk +19; **Grp** +30
Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack
Special Atk breath weapon (80 ft. line of acid; 12d4 plus poison; Ref DC 23 half; 1d4 rounds between uses)
Spells Prepared (CL 3rd, +19 ranged touch)
1st (6/day)—*alarm*, *charm person* (DC 12), *mage armor*
0 (6/day)—*daze* (DC 11), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 11), *open/close*, *ray of frost*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)
3/day—*darkness*
1/day—*corrupt water* (DC 20)

Abilities Str 25, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12
SQ water breathing
Feats Flyby Attack, Improved Natural Armor, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Multiattack, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite), Wingover
Skills Bluff +15, Climb +21, Diplomacy +5, Hide +17, Intimidate +14, Listen +16, Move Silently +21, Search +10, Sense Motive +22, Spot +20, Swim +26

Breath Weapon (Su): Ilthane's breath weapon exudes toxic fumes in addition to inflicting acid damage. Anyone who suffers damage from Ilthane's breath weapon must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of Strength damage. One minute later, the character must make another DC 23 Fortitude save or take another 1d4 points of Strength damage.

*Includes adjustments for 6-point Power Attack.

Tactics: Ilthane watches the entrance to the Whispering Cairn from a small copse of trees on a hilltop 100 feet from the tomb's entrance. Even after dark, her senses are keen enough that she automatically notices anyone who attempts to approach the cairn without bothering to hide. Since she's 100 feet away, she takes a –10 penalty on Listen and Spot checks to notice anyone else approach the cairn entrance. She sleeps twice a day in six-hour shifts (from noon to dusk and from midnight to dawn), relying on an *alarm* spell she casts on the cairn entrance to alert her to intruders during these hours.

As soon as she notices anyone approaching the cairn, she casts *mage armor* and leaps into the air, flying low around the backside of the hill and as quietly as she can to approach the party from behind. Characters who make a Listen or Spot check (opposed by her Move Silently and Hide checks but penalized by –5 for distance) catch a glimpse of her approach, or hear the beating of her wings.

On the first round of combat, Ilthane tries to catch as many of the PCs as she can with her breath weapon. She then lands between the party and the cairn entrance, perhaps perching right above it, attacking anyone in reach. As she fights, she roars out in Common, "Dragotha take you all! The wizard is mine!"

Ilthane pursues the PCs into the Whispering Cairn, but does not follow them into Icosiol's Tomb if they make it that far. She instead waits outside for up to another week, planning to ambush the PCs as they exit the tomb.

Development: Ilthane's lair is hidden far to the north near the town of Alhaster. The PCs may get a chance to find it (and the strange alchemical treasures it contains) in part 8 of the Age of Worms Adventure Path.

The Black Seal

PART TWO: ICOSIOL'S TOMB

Once they defeat Ilthane, the party can enter the Whispering Cairn unopposed. It's possible to track Allustan's progress through the Whispering Cairn and Icosiol's tomb with a

DC 24 Survival check by someone with the Track feat.

Even if the PCs can't track him, it should be obvious to those who have visited the Whispering Cairn before where he went. The last time the PCs were in the Cairn, one of the passageways to the east had been collapsed. Allustan has cleared this passageway out, revealing the Black Seal at area 1.

Once the PCs reach Icosiol's tomb, the atmosphere is dry and cool. Periodic and playful gusts of wind haunt the halls, keeping dust from accumulating and filling the tomb with a constant susurrus. Walls are of reinforced masonry, and doors are of basalt. A DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check is enough to establish the fact that the tomb is incredibly ancient, but was built to last eons and has weathered the passage of time well.

1. The Black Seal (EL 10)

The walls of this passageway are scarred and dented, indicating that this whole area has been, until recently, collapsed. At the end of the tunnel stands a glossy black surface with a raised sphere in the center, like the boss in the center of a shield. The glossy black surface resembles a heavily lacquered door.

The strange black doorway appears solid, but objects striking it make it shiver and ripple as if it were a vertical wall of water or soft gelatin. A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the object as a portal. The doorway can be passed through by simply walking through it—doing so is like walking through a particularly viscous wall of warm mud. Passing through the portal is a full-round action, and only one creature may do so at a time. Unfortunately, doing so provokes attacks of opportunity from the door's guardian.

Portal to Icosiol's Tomb: Hardness 16; hp 60; Break DC 28; Caster Level 20.

Creature: Anyone who touches the portal is immediately subject to the attack of the door's guardian, an abyssal ghoul. Magically bound into the door ages ago by the Wind Dukes, the ghoul was activated from its long sleep when Allustan first used the portal. The ghoul effectively occupies the square the portal is in; in order to pass through the portal and into Icosiol's Tomb beyond, a character must Tumble or overrun the ghoul to move through the its space. Becoming ethereal also allows free passage by the ghoul. A *dimension door*, *teleport*, or similar spell cast while a character is touching the door also allows free passage through the portal into Icosiol's Tomb (this is how Allustan entered the tomb without destroying the ghoul). The ghoul cannot be moved out of the doorway with bull rush or similar tactics.

The ghoul can be attacked without penalty by anyone who is in contact with the portal—the ghoul gains total concealment and cover from all other attackers, gaining a +4 bonus to its Armor Class and a 50% miss chance. In addition, the portal's hardness 16 applies to attacks against the ghoul from sources not in contact with the portal. Any attack directed at the ghoul from someone not in contact with the portal also damages the portal. If the portal is destroyed, it shuts down immediately and releases the ghoul into the Whispering Cairn or Icosiol's Tomb (50% chance of either location). If the ghoul is slain or banished, the portal can be passed through freely. A successful turn undead check forces the ghoul out of the portal (equal chances of ending up on either side). Rebuke undead does not have this result, but does render the ghoul docile enough to allow passage through the portal without opposition.

The ghoul can attack anyone within 5 feet of the portal; since it has total concealment against targets not in contact with the door, it applies its sneak attack damage automatically. If no one is in reach, the ghoul can withdraw completely into the portal, at which point it cannot be targeted or harmed (the portal itself can still be damaged, of course).

Abyssal Ghoul **CR 10**

CE Medium undead (extraplanar)

Init +7; **Senses** blindsight 90 ft, *deathwatch* 90 ft, Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Abyssal

Fiend Folio 13

AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 27; Dodge, Mobility, uncanny dodge

hp 104 (16 HD)

Immune electricity; undead traits

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 20

Fort +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12

Spd 40 ft.

Melee 2 front claws +15 (1d4+7 plus disease) and rear claws +13 (2d4+3 plus disease)

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +15 (drain 1d6 Wis on a successful pin)

Atk Options sneak attack +5d6, improved grab (if both front claws hit)

Special Atk wisdom drain

Abilities Str 25, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 18

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Multiattack, Spring Attack

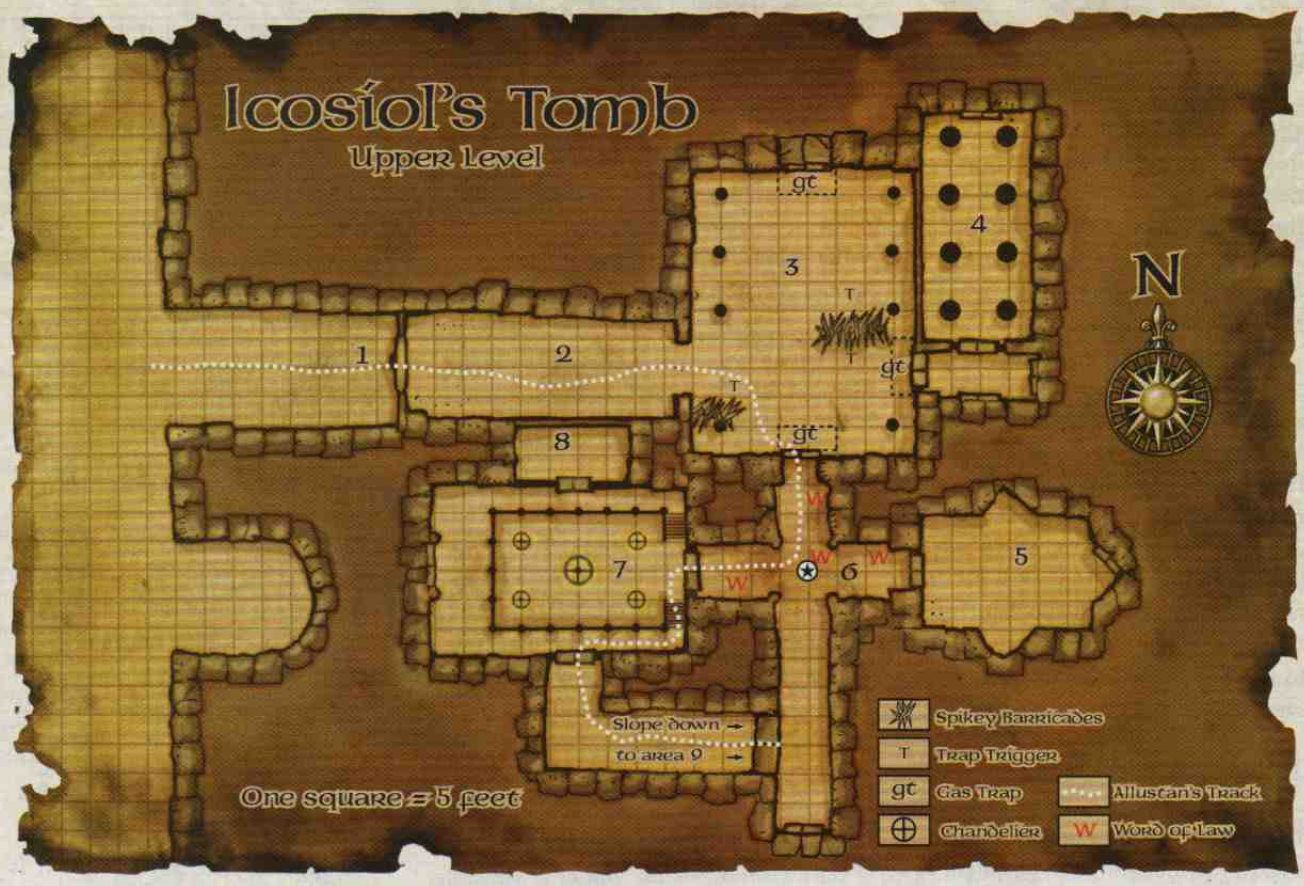
Skills Balance +20, Climb +20, Hide +20, Jump +23, Move Silently +20, Tumble +20

Disease (Ex): Fortitude DC 18, incubation period 1 day, 1d6 Constitution. Each time a creature suffers Constitution damage, it must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or 1 point of the damage taken becomes Constitution drain instead.

Development: The abyssal ghoul is mildly insane and can offer few clues if captured. If the party releases the ghoul and then leaves or rests to heal after defeating Ilthane, they may find the ghoul cleaning up after them. (It eats the dragon's corpse from the inside out.) The ghoul spends at least a week scavenging dragon meat before moving on to explore Diamond Lake.

If the portal is destroyed, the PCs will have a bit of trouble reaching Icosiol's Tomb. The portal can be repaired by any character that has Craft Wondrous Item and knows *gate*, *greater teleport*, *plane shift*, *teleport*, or *teleportation circle*—doing so requires an expenditure of 25,000 gp, 2,000 XP, and 50 days of work. Since Allustan is currently trapped in stasis and the Age of Worms campaign is not on a countdown, there's really no repercussions (apart from the expenditure of resources) on the PCs if they choose this route. Of course, the PCs have no way of knowing this, and likely balk at the prospect of taking 50 days and thousands of gp and XP to repair the portal.

Fortunately, there is an alternative. A character who studies the ruined portal



with a *detect magic* (or a similar spell) and makes a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana), Spellcraft, or bardic knowledge check notices that, while the portal itself is destroyed, the portal at the far side still operates, and its magic is still linked to the ruined portal. As a result, a character that touches the ruined portal and casts a *plane shift*, *teleport*, or *greater teleport* spell can transport himself (along with however many other characters the spell allows) to the far portal, as if the current portal were still functional.

Characters who step through the portal are transported to area 2. Although shown on the map as if the two points are physically connected (and to the PCs' perception, this is how it should seem), Icosiol's Tomb is in fact deep under the ancient Fields of Pesh, in a region about 500 miles northeast of Diamond Lake. If the PCs somehow manage to travel up from the tomb through 1,000 feet of bedrock, they emerge in a barren stretch of plains. To the north, a single volcano looms, a plume of steam drifting from its peak. A DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check correctly identifies this volcano as the legendary White Plume Mountain. There is no physical entrance to Icosiol's Tomb from this region, and if the PCs decide to explore the area, you'll need to develop additional adventures as you see fit.

2. The Howling Gallery (EL 11)

This sharply sloped hallway is filled with rushing, screaming wind and smoke. Small hollow projections in the hallway seem to be making the noise, but it's obvious that air inside is being pushed out at an unusual rate. The noise makes hearing and speaking difficult.

This tunnel was meant to purify visitors with blasts of elemental air. The screaming winds in the first tunnel are created by the tunnel architecture itself as air moves over the projections. The tunnel magnifies the sounds, making communication almost impossible (DC 25 Listen check to hear and understand someone) and forcing a DC 25 Concentration check to cast spells with verbal components.

The small noisemaking projections in the hall can be broken off relatively easily with blunt weapons (hp 5, hardness 3). If all twelve stone noisemakers are broken, the noise stops. For each once broken, reduce the DCs listed above by one.

Creatures: This tunnel is delightful terrain for six belkers, ancient protectors of the tomb who enjoy the fresh outside air that filters into this chamber. The belkers are in smoke form to begin with and use that form to quickly appear all around the party. They attack any non-elemental creatures entering the hall. The wind itself, while loud, isn't particularly strong. It does reduce the fly speed of a belker in smoke form by 20 feet, however.

Belkers (6): hp 38 each; *Monster Manual* 27.

3. The Hall of Poison Winds (EL 11)

This tall, temple-like chamber has a forty-foot-high ceiling. Carved stone pillars reach up to the ceiling in elegant lines, but strange clusters of spikes stick up from the floor in two distinct areas, like barricades.

Near the doors to the north, south, and east stand carved stone images of tall, elongated humanoid forms. A series of small openings, each about one inch in diameter, festoon the wall between these forms. Beneath these openings are small basins, each about the size of an apple. Strange undulations make the doors and nearby walls seem more like a curtain than a level surface. Twisting runes wind over the walls. The floor has channels carved in it, as if to transport water, but nothing flows there now.

The wall runes are written in an ancient language called Vaati, considered by many to be the original written form of Auran. A DC 25 Decipher Script check made by someone who speaks Auran allows translation of these runes, as does *comprehend langauges*. The runes mention "glorious Icosiol," an "Incomparable Army," and similar terms of praise as part of a general description of the Battle of Pesh. Speaking Icosiol's name aloud in this room deactivates both traps for one hour.

The doors to the north are false doors, two of many in the tomb placed to confound and confuse tomb robbers.

Trap: Two traps, one wind-based and one using poisonous, magical gas, guard this chamber.

The first trap is linked to the blade barricades. Anyone stepping on a square marked with a "T" triggers the trap, causing a powerful blast of wind to strike that character and hurl him onto the spikes. There were once many more pressure plates to activate this trap, but time has ruined most of them.

The second trap is linked to the tiny holes in the walls and the small basins along the floor. The basins radiate faint transmutation magic, and when triggered by someone standing on a square marked "GT," they generate a plume of white vapor that looks like fog. When this vapor is created, it runs up along and melds with the bas-reliefs on the wall, generating a fluid image that shows Icosiol at the battle of Pesh, fighting twisted creatures of chaos. The last image is rendered in some detail, and depicts Icosiol forming an alliance with a powerful marut inevitable. At the end of the display, the gas fountains show Icosiol holding a large square seal in one hand and a long rod or staff in the other, as if to display them to the viewer. The vapor that animates these images is poisonous, affecting any creature within 10 feet of the room's walls.

Windpsike Trap: CR 5; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset; blast of hurricane-force wind (DC 20 Fort, Huge or larger creatures unaffected, Large creatures knocked prone, smaller creatures thrown onto spikes for 4d6 points of piercing damage); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

Poison Gas Trap: CR 10; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset; gas; never miss; onset delay 1 round; poison (DC 18 Fortitude save resists, 1d4 Dex/2d6 Dex); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

4. Collapsing Pillar Hall (EL 8)

This long hall contains a twin set of pillars, leading to a large set of doors at the far end. These are columns made of large marble blocks shaped like drums; not all have aged quite the same, so their colors vary from gray to white to tan.

Trap: This hall is little more than a dead end and a trap against chaotic intruders. The doors at the far end are false and open onto a blank stone wall marked with the arrow symbol of Law. If a chaotically aligned creature steps within five feet of a pillar, it immediately topples down onto that character. Opening the false doors at the north end of the hall cause all of the pillars to collapse, potentially affecting everyone in the room.

Falling Pillar Trap: CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger (*detect chaos*); repair reset; multiple targets (all within 5 feet of pillar); 8d6 crushing damage; DC 22 Reflex half; Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

Development: The shadow spider Flycatcher (see area **9**) may also attack here, grabbing a PC and immediately retreating.

5. The Earl of Coalchester (EL 13)

A rush of superheated air flows from this room like the heat from a forge. Glowing hot coals cover the room's floor. A pair of copper double doors stand at the far end of the room. A small chest of black stone sits in the far corner of the room.

The temperature here is extreme; creatures inside take 1d6 fire damage per minute. In addition, creatures must make a Fortitude save every 5 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Creatures wearing heavy clothing or armor take a –4 penalty on their saves. Those wearing metal armor or touching metal are affected as if by *heat metal*.

Creatures: A noble salamander and his fire elemental servant have been bound here by ancient elemental vows to serve the Wind Dukes as tomb guardians. The current guardian is Antyress Redpike of Coalchester, and he is bored by his duty and by the lack of visitors. He remains in this room unless he hears the sound of combat or traps being triggered nearby, in which case he begrudgingly slithers out to investigate.

Antyress and his elemental bodyguard Smoughed do not immediately attack intruders. The salamander is very chatty, even while he fighting. His ego and narcissism are forces to be reckoned with—the only subject that he enjoys more than himself is complaining about the miserable duties he is forced to perform here. It's possible that the PCs can talk him out of attacking them. His initial attitude is unfriendly, and if made friendly he agrees to turn a blind eye toward the party. He can be bribed with gems or jewelry—each 500 gp in value offered increases the Diplomacy check result to adjust his attitude by 1. If made helpful, Antyress also warns the party about the Keeper (area **10**), the xorn at the gate (area **11**).

The one thing Antyress won't mention to the PCs is the shadow spider Flycatcher. Not long ago, Flycatcher told Antyress of the existence of the true tomb of Icosiol, and the salamander dreams of escaping the oaths that hold him and plundering the treasures said to be hidden there. He has tried and failed several times to reach the tomb on his own, and hopes some day to earn Flycatcher's trust so the two can work together to realize this goal.

Antyress Redpike, Earl of Coalchester (noble salamander): hp 112; AL LE; *Monster Manual* 219.

Smoughed, Huge Fire Elemental: hp 136; *Monster Manual* 99.

Tactics: If attacked, Antyress prefers to avoid direct melee by hiding behind his elemental. If he suffers more than 30 points of damage, Antyress summons a second Huge fire elemental to defend him. He claims to not want to fight at all, but pretends he is "compelled by conjuration," cheerfully spouting things like, "So sorry to stab you in the vitals like that, old chap. I'm compelled by conjuration. Can't be helped." These are lies, of course, but Antyress is a pretty good liar.

If his elementals are defeated, Antyress flees to hide elsewhere in the tomb and bide his time for revenge. He may seek out Flycatcher to recruit the shadow spider's aid.

Treasure: Antyress wears a platinum circlet worth 1,000 gp on his brow, a symbol of his office as Earl of Coalchester. Likewise, his *+3 longspear* is emblazoned with his personal runes and sigils. He keeps his other treasures in the chest. The chest is locked (DC 30 Open Lock) but Antyress carries the key. The chest itself is made of a black stone (basalt) bound together with red gold, copper, and rusted iron, and weighs 300 pounds all by itself, 450 pounds with all its contents. It contains 2,300 gp, a knitted copper drawpurse containing 300 pp and 2 large honey-golden topazes (both worth 600 gp), and a narrow brass scroll case containing a *wand of invisibility* (9 charges). The chest also contains four thick crystal decanters of an efreeti brandy called scarlet ambrosia (worth 200 gp each), all four cushioned in a small portable bar of hammered brass.

6. The Sword of Law (EL 9)

This intersection is lit by six flickering orange and yellow lanterns that float around a central statue of grey stone. The statue shows an androgynous Wind Duke wearing robes that seem to be stirred by a breeze. The figure may be a symbol of justice or war, for it holds a glittering sword outstretched in one hand and carries a balance in the other. The statue is eight feet tall and stands on a four-foot-tall pedastal.

Trap: This passage and intersection is trapped by the word of law. Three traps exist in the passageway itself, while the statue itself is a trap. The noise of their firing alerts the salamander in area **5** to the party's presence. These traps trigger as soon as a non-lawful creature enters a square marked with a W, or as soon as any creature touches or manipulates the statue or its sword.

The Word of Law: CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*dictum*, 13th-level cleric); Search DC 32; Disable Device 32.

Treasure: The excellently crafted statue is worth more than 2,000 gp, but it's made of solid granite and weighs just over 3 tons. The statue's sword is a mithral greatsword, and can be removed from the statue with relative ease.

The levitating lanterns are enchanted with *continual flame*. These lanterns are removable, though they continue to float and may drift away unless tethered or shepherded by hand.

Development: If the PCs didn't encounter Flycatcher in area 4 yet, they may meet the shadow spider here. He knows that the patch of slick silk next to one of the word of law traps gives him a good chance to capture a PC, and the other word of law traps should cover his retreat.

7. The Silent Gallery (EL 12)

This two-tiered hall shines with purple light from four large chandeliers. A large black sphere hangs between them. The chandeliers seem to be sculpted with small humanoid figures in silvery metal. A second-floor gallery with arches and spiral-striped pillars runs the length of the hallway to a second set of large double doors. The black tile floor absorbs the light from the chandeliers, and even sound in this chamber seems muted and dull.

The strange sound-muffling quality of this room causes a –10 penalty on all Listen checks made in this chamber. The chandeliers are magic, lighting whenever anyone moves within 60 feet of them. The black sphere hanging from the ceiling is in fact the personal symbol of an ancient elemental lord. A DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies this symbol as that of Bwimb, a great and cruel general of the Para-elemental Plane of Ooze who allied with the Queen of Chaos long ago in the war against the Wind Dukes. This sphere radiates moderate conjuration magic, but its only purpose is to periodically provide nourishment for the creature that guards the chamber.

A close examination of the chandeliers reveals that each tier of lights are tiny humanoid wind warriors fighting against the armies of Chaos in the Battle of Pesh. The chandeliers are shaped similar to wagon wheels with unusual spokes; each spoke consists of a long shaft terminating in a black metal hoop. These spokes are identical to the shape of the inactive *talisman of the sphere* that the party may have found in area 25 of the Whispering Cairn. Tiny statuettes on one chandelier show a dog-headed demon surrendering its weapons to General Icosiol. Another shows a horned demon covered with many eyes kneeling before Icosiol (this is the oculus demon imprisoned in area 24). On outer spokes, similar surrenders of abyssal ghouls, vrocks, beholders, and chaotic froglike humanoids to the Wind Duke armies is depicted. Some of the wind warriors depicted in these tiny glowing statuettes hold items similar to the *talisman of the sphere*, and use these to ward off black globes in a battle scene.

The frescos and wall decorations show a lumbering inevitable reaching for a square stone covered with runes on a platter carried by small glowing creatures. Three runes seem to be spilling from the creature's mouth. These runes are written in Vaati (see area 3 above for deciphering rules), and give the command words necessary to allow someone to handle and transport the *Seal of Law* safely. See the appendix for more information about the *Seal of Law*.

Creature: The guardian of this chamber is an elder spawn from the brood pits of Bwimb, a great menace of elemental ooze who fought against Aaqa in the great war against the Queen of Chaos. Although mindless, it remains a lord among oozes. This elder black pudding hides in plain sight in a depression in the floor just below the four chandeliers, its dull black surface almost indistinguishable from the surrounding tiles. A DC 30 Spot check sees through the clever camouflage.

The elder black pudding remains calm as long as no one tries to walk on it or attempts to damage or steal any of the room's contents. A creature that steps on it is subjected to an automatic trip attempt by the elder black pudding. Once it attacks, the ooze pursues its prey relentlessly, returning to this chamber only if no living creatures are within 60 feet. It is magically bound to the tomb complex, and cannot leave it under any circumstances.

Elder Black Pudding: hp 290; *Monster Manual* 201.

Treasure: Each of the chandeliers is worth 800 gp and weighs 100 pounds.

8. The Courtesan's Tomb (EL 12)

This small but well-appointed room has a delicately arched ceiling. The walls are painted with garden scenes featuring two Wind Duke lovers, and the center of the room contains a large urn with a dark red glaze and gold decorations. Six small boxes, each carved of some black substance bound with corroded metal, line the back wall. Chairs sit in each corner.

This room contains treasures from Icosiol's life off the battlefield, including the cremated remains of his courtesan Marisella.

Trap: The urn holds Marisella's ashes, and is heavily trapped, firing an *energy drain* spell at anyone who tampers with it.

Urn *Energy Drain* Trap: CR 10; magical device; touch trigger; repair reset; spell effect (*energy drain*, 17th-level wizard, Atk +16 ranged touch, 2d4 negative levels); Search DC 34, Disable Device DC 34.

Treasure: The chests are all locked (Open Lock DC 35), and contain various treasures: a *wand of eagle's splendor* (15 charges), a set of three clay tablets carved with the elemental glyphs of the Wind Dukes (love poems written in Vaati worth 500 gp each), a set of scrolls long since crumbled to dust, a set of silk gowns and robes that turn to dust as they are lifted up (but set with 200 tiny 25 gp pearls and 40 50 gp turquoises), and a wicker basket containing a matching platinum necklace, ring, and earrings worth 8,000 gp for the set (or 1,500 gp each).

9. The Shadow Web (EL 11)

This rectangular room has small columns around the edges that partially hide the carvings along the walls. Pale white light glows from two large wheel-shaped chandeliers, casting overlapping shadows

throughout the room. Blue metal double doors stand at the top of a flight of stairs opposite the main entrance, guarded by two warrior figures with raised double swords, as well as a single doorway to the south and double doors to the north, also guarded by warrior statues.

This chamber is the entrance hall to the lower chambers of Icosiol's Tomb. Once guarded by several powerful air elementals that animated the statues in the room, the chamber now serves as the home of an even stranger beast. The stairs, floor, doors, and walls of this chamber are crisscrossed with tiny tangles of shadow—these are the webs of the shadow spider Flycatcher. They are not sticky, but Flycatcher can sense when anything touches or passes over them.

Creatures: The unusually intelligent shadow spider sorcerer that has taken such an interest in Icosiol's Tomb refers to himself by several names, including Blackleg, Walker Across the Threshold, Spitgob, Cornerweaver, Hungry Prince, or (most often) Flycatcher. The party may come to think that several spiders stalk them, but it's really just Flycatcher under his various aliases. Flycatcher discovered the tomb accidentally while *shadow walking* many years ago, and quickly became obsessed with the tomb, returning here often from his home on the Plane of Shadow to bask in the tomb's secrets. In that time, he's come to think of himself as the tomb's guardian, his dementia and madness seizing on the location for reasons unknown even to himself.

Flycatcher doesn't react well to intruders, whom he suspects (with good reason) are here to rob the tomb of its great treasures. He regularly patrols the upper chambers of the tomb, and may run into the PCs in area **4** or **6**. He attempts to catch a PC that looks physically weak and then retreats with his prey to this chamber, where he waits for the rest of the PCs to seek him out. You should have Flycatcher target a henchman, cohort, or perhaps even a familiar or animal companion—if he manages to snatch someone, he'll wrap the victim in spider silk and stash him in a cage on the Plane of Shadow, which could effectively remove a captured PC from the game for an extended period of time.

In any event, if Flycatecher manages to catch someone, he uses that victim as a bargaining chip. He claims that he could be convinced to release the captured character if the party agrees to slay someone he calls the "Marquis of the River."

Flycatcher speaks of Moreto, a true ghoul, one of a race of undead who populate cities in a forgotten reach of the Underdark called the White Kingdom. Flycatcher tells the PCs that Moreto dwells in a cavern deep under these tombs, a cavern accessible via a "river of blood" that flows through the tomb. If the PCs agree to bring Flycatcher Moreto's head, the shadow spider agrees to return their friend.

Flycatcher's initial attitude toward the PCs is unfriendly. If the PCs can make him friendly, he'll agree to ransom a captured character for 20,000 gp (or the equivalent value in magic items), promising to return the item once the PCs kill Moreto. If the PCs make him helpful, he is so impressed that he returns the abducted character as a sign of good will, but still demands the PCs kill the true ghoul.

The shadow spider is evasive about his reasons for wanting Moreto killed. If asked, he claims that Moreto has tormented him for ages and Flycatcher just wants revenge. This is a lie, and since Flycatcher's not that good at Bluff, the PCs will doubtless realize this. Flycatcher's actual reason is more complex. Several days ago, Moreto and his undead minions invaded the tomb. The true ghoul managed to steal a potent artifact from area **10** and escaped back down the Falling River before Flycatcher could stop him. The shadow spider is paranoid now about leaving the tomb ungarded, and dares not pursue Moreto down the cavern below. The shadow spider's been wracking his brain for a way to get the *Seal of Law* out of Moreto's clutches, and views the PCs as his best chance.

While Flycatcher can be bargained with, he is a bizarre conversationalist, speaking in a stream-of-consciousness gibberish. He considers the entire tomb his territory, though his main hunting grounds are elsewhere.

FLYCATCHER **CR 13**

Male shadow spider sorcerer 3
LN Huge magical beast (extraplanar)
Monster Manual II 184
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft. low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Common

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 18
hp 175 (16 HD); **DR** 10/magic
SR 23
Fort +17, **Ref** +13, **Will** +9

Spd 50 ft., climb 30 ft.
Melee 4 claws +20 (2d4+8) and bite +18 (2d6+4 plus paralysis)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +30
Atk Options improved grab (two claws)
Special Atk silk slick
Spells Known (CL 3)
1st (6/day)—comprehend languages, shield, true strike
0 (6/day)—detect magic, ghost sound (DC 12), mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10)
At will—*shadow walk* (DC 18)

Abilities Str 26, Dex 15, Con 22, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14

SQ summon familiar (none currently)
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack
Skills Bluff +5, Climb +20, Hide –2 (+18 in shadows), Listen +4, Spot +4
Possessions *bracers of armor +5*

Paralysis (Ex): Anyone bitten by a shadow spider must make a DC 24 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 4 rounds.
Silk Slick (Su): As a full-round action, a shadow spider can spray a layer of spider silk over any solid surface. It can cover up to 100 square feet with this substance, which dries and evaporates in 13 rounds. The silk slick functions in all other respects like a *grease* spell (caster level 13, Reflex save DC 20).

Tactics: Flycatcher uses hit-and-run tactics in combat, trying to abduct characters and strand them on the Plane of Shadow using his *shadow walk* ability. He abandons the tomb completely if brought below 20 hit points.

Treasure: If the party can reach the Plane of Shadow (perhaps with a *shadow walk* spell of their own), they can easily find Flycatcher's larder on the Plane

of Shadow in approximately the same location as this chamber. In addition to any characters the shadow spider has abducted, the larder is littered with the possessions of previous victims, including 1,800 sp, 4,000 gp, an empty decanter of cut quartz with a carved, star-shaped quartz stopper worth a total of 1,000 gp, a black pearl worth 600 gp, a clearly flawed ruby worth 800 gp, a silver parade helmet with gold inlays worth 1,500 gp, and a necklace of gold set with dozens of small pearls worth 2,000 gp.

10. The Keeper's Chambers (EL 11)

A set of dusty and archaic armor rests in front of a small shrine, apparently long abandoned. The weapon stand before the armor lies empty except for flakes of rust. Behind the armor is a small altar loaded with dusty offerings from years past. A statue of a regal Wind Duke sits in a small nook above the altar, and a door is painted on the wall to the right.

This was the private room of a Wind Duke servitor named Zifforian. A DC 25 Spot check reveals that another item once rested in a recessed spot next to the statue of the Wind Duke hero. This less-dusty niche is where the *Seal of Law* once sat—Moreto snatched it and then promptly fled with it down the Falling River.

Creature: Zifforian was a Wind Duke servitor who watched over the tomb—every decade or two, a new servitor would arrive to relieve the previous tombkeeper. The post was considered an honorable one, if hopelessly dull. That changed when Zifforian was forgotten during the Wind Dukes' decline. When the poor wretch found the portal leading out of the tomb had been sealed and warded with an abyssal ghoul, he accepted his fate stoically. He spent centuries watching over the site, but eventually age drove him to a lingering death.

Zifforian slowly lost his mind over those years, and after his death he rose as a dread wraith. He was gone when the *Seal of Law* was stolen a few weeks ago, and now obsesses about the lost item, muttering constantly about the "theft of the shrine treasures by the foot soldiers." He mindlessly attacks anyone that enters this room, stepping in through the door painted on the wall.

Zifforian, Dread Wraith: hp 104; *Monster Manual* 258.

Treasure: The dusty armor is a suit of *+2 electricity resistance banded mail.*

11. The River of Blood (EL 11)

A river surges through the tomb here, its red water as bright as blood. A stone bridge crosses the river, but the pilings have been undermined by erosion over the centuries, and the bridge arches are barely holding. In several places, the bridge tilts dangerously to the side. On the far side of the river is a fortified gatehouse, dimly visible and secured by an enormous rusted gate. The gate must be fifteen feet tall and just as wide.

Despite appearances, the river that flows through the tomb here is not made of blood. The unusual color of the water is a result of a large deposit of minerals upriver from this location. Nonetheless, the Wind Dukes appreciated the morbidity of the river as a fitting testament to the blood that was shed during the great war between Law and Chaos.

Crossing the bridge on foot is dangerous; the sloping sections are treacherous, and the footing is bad throughout. It requires a DC 15 Balance check to cross the bridge; failure by 5 or more indicates a character has fallen into the river below. The bridge collapses entirely (dealing 3d6 damage to anyone on it when it falls) if more than 500 pounds of weight are placed on it at any one time. It's a 30-foot-fall to the frothing red waters below.

The riverbanks are steep, slippery cliffs that can be scaled with a DC 20 Climb check. The river itself is only 10 feet deep at its deepest point, and flows rather swiftly. A DC 15 Swim check is required to navigate the river, and the current washes anyone in it downriver at a speed of 20 feet toward area **20**. Of course, characters in the river quickly attract the attention of its guardians (see area **16**).

Creatures: This chamber has become the lair of a group of six xorns who have been following the river's path for the past few weeks, foraging on the delicious ore deposits that run along its length and give it its ruddy coloration. The xorns are protective of their territory, and especially hate gnomes (due to a recent ambush by svirfneblin in the Underdark). They attack gnomish PCs in preference to others during this encounter.

The xorns hide in the stone in the locations indicated on the map; when anyone comes within 5 feet of a xorn, it rears up out of the ground and attacks, with any other xorns in the room joining the fray soon thereafter.

Xorns (6): hp 48 each; *Monster Manual* 261.

12. The Tomb Gatehouse

The entrance to this gatehouse is made of flaking, rusting iron, with hinges on the other side and a series of glyphs and protective amulets inset in the iron. Some of the amulets look almost like feathers, while others seem more like mill wheels or maybe latches or levers. The thick rust makes it difficult to say what the engravings are really meant to be. Some seem to be smudged with black dirt or ashes.

This false gatehouse has a set of iron doors overlaid with elaborate warding magic, multiple castings of *Nystul's magic aura*, carved and inlaid glyphs, semi-precious seals, and a scattering of dials, knobs, and levers—most of which serve no purpose but to encourage tomb robbers to waste time and resources. The small walkway and arrow slits are part of the façade.

With a DC 25 Disable Device check made on the gate, something clicks into place within the door, and a new device, dial, or lever slides into view. The main iron gate stays closed unless someone makes a DC 35 Disable Device check, at which point it opens to reveal a less battered but equally complicated door behind it.

These doors can become a huge time-waster for tinkering parties. A DC 30 Search of the mechanisms themselves rather than the door reveals that some of the levers are not even connected to anything that opens this door.

Iron Gatehouse Doors: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28.

13. The Wind Duke's Antechamber (EL 11)

A small statue of an armored Wind Duke, his left hand resting on a sword, his right held up to shield his eyes, stands at the far wall of this room as part of a small shrine. The statue seems to be made of gold, with sparkling blue gems for eyes; a beam of bright light shines onto the statue from above. The walls are carved with bas-reliefs of Wind Duke servants bowing and soldiers saluting. An elaborate carpet covers the floor, but it is badly worn and the colors have faded—only small patches of the complete pattern remain.

This formal shrine was meant for Wind Duke officials and visitors to bring offerings and prayers for Icosiol. Its main feature is a four-foot-tall statue of the Wind Duke Icosiol made of ceramic and nickel-plated iron and covered with a thin layer of gold.

Creatures: The bas-reliefs to either side of the shrine show Icosiol triumphant over the Wind Dukes' enemies—basic propaganda, but well-done nevertheless. The reliefs also show many Wind Duke soldiers attending Icosiol. Two of these soldiers are in fact unusual constructs called relief golems, stationed here to guard the room. If the PCs damage anything in the room or try to steal any of the gemstones, the two relief golems clamber out of the wall and attack. They pursue creatures from this room only if that creature carries any treasure stolen from here.

Relief Golem (2) CR 9
N Large construct
Dragon #334 42
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1
AC 23, touch 9, flat-footed 23
hp 129 (18 HD); **DR** 10/piercing or bludgeoning
Immune magic, construct traits
Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7
Spd 20 ft.
Melee 2 slams +18 (2d8+6/19–20)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +23
Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Sunder, Power Attack
Abilities Str 23, Dex 10, Con —, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 1
SQ *meld into stone, phase door*
Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Natural Attack (slam), Improved Sunder, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack
Skills Hide +6 (+26 when merged into a wall), Move Silently +11
Immunity to Magic (Ex): A relief golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance, with a few exceptions. A *stone to flesh* spell prevents

it from using its *meld with stone* and *phase door* abilities and negates its damage reduction for 1 hour (no save). A *soften earth and stone* slows the golem for 2d4 rounds (no save). *Transmute mud to rock* heals it of all lost hit points.

***Meld into Stone* (Sp):** A relief golem can enter a stone surface at will as a standard action as per the spell *meld into stone*. While inside a wall, any carvings or paintings on the wall shift and alter to accommodate the image of the relief golem that appears where it has merged. A relief golem can see and hear out of the stone surface; this effect lasts until the relief golem decides to exit the stone. This effect operates at caster level 18. Casting *stone shape* on a wall containing a relief golem forces it to leave immediately.

***Phase Door* (Sp):** A relief golem can walk through wood, plaster, and stone walls at will as per the spell *phase door* as a standard action. Such portals can only be used once and the relief golem cannot take other creatures through. The caster level for this effect is 18.

Treasure: The statue's eyes are pale blue topazes worth 1,000 gp each. The statue itself is worth more than 9,500 gp as a work of ancient art, but it weighs 2,500 pounds and would require strong bearers to carry it out. If the gold is stripped, it's worth 800 gp as raw materials.

14. The Tempest Globe (EL 10)

This room is full of flickering bluish light and a breeze that smells like thunderstorms. The floor slopes down toward the center from all directions, like a funnel. At the bottom crackles a sparkling globe of lightning. A metallic spike protruding down from a stone block in the ceiling touches the very tip of the globe's upper curve. Inside the globe floats a human figure, a man with a long dark beard wearing torn and stained red robes.

The figure in the sphere of electricity is Allustan, as anyone who knows the wizard can immediately identify. He has fallen victim to this room's dangerous trap, and until rescued, remains in stasis inside the tempest globe.

Trap: Any creature entering the room is struck by a bolt of lightning from the metal spike protruding from the ceiling. The spike can generate one bolt per person, inflicting 8d6 points of electricity damage (or half on a DC 20 Reflex save).

The tempest globe serves a second function as well—it is a prison. As long as the globe in the middle of the room is empty, any creature that takes damage from the spike's electrical bolt must make a second DC 20 Reflex save or be instantaneously transported inside the globe of electricity and placed in *temporal stasis*. Prisoners of the tempest globe remain trapped eternally unless rescued, but as long as a prisoner is in the globe it cannot capture additional victims.

The Wind Dukes used tempest globe traps to capture creatures for study, or as prisons for dangerous enemies. It's possible to deactivate the tempest globe with a DC 35 Disable Device check, but remember that the spike continues to launch electrical bolts at anyone in the room. Alternately, the device's magic can be suppressed for 1d4 rounds with a successful *dispel magic* against caster level 17. This frees Allustan, but if he remains in the room once the trap's magic returns he may simply be captured again. Finally, destroying the metal spike above the globe renders the tempest globe inactive. The spike does not generate bolts of lightning at creatures that target it with magic or attacks from beyond this room.

Tempest Globe: CR 10; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset; no attack roll required (8d6 electrical, DC 20 Reflex half plus possible *temporal stasis*); Search DC 10; Disable Device DC 35.

Iron Spike: Hardness 10; hp 180; Break DC 36.

Development: Allustan has been trapped in the tempest globe and held in stasis for several days. He does not age, grow hungry or thirsty, or even dream while inside the globe. Nor can he escape on his own.

If the PCs manage to rescue him, Allustan collapses to the ground unconscious. The bolt of electricity that struck him and trapped him reduced him to –3 hit points, but the stasis effect kept him from bleeding to death. Once the globe is removed, he immediately begins to bleed again. If the PCs used a *dispel magic* to suppress the globe and they don't drag the unconscious wizard out of the room before it reactivates, he'll probably die.

Once the PCs return Allustan to consciousness, he is momentarily confused but recovers quickly. The PCs likely have quite a lot of questions for him at this point, but his first order of business is to find out if Ilthane has been defeated. If the PCs are on good terms with Allustan, he agrees to answer some of their questions as soon as he feels safe enough to do so. His answers to probable questions are listed below.

Where have you been? "I've been investigating the Whispering Cairn. Several days ago, I uncovered a new portal—Since you're here, I assume you've seen it. Beyond, I found this tomb. I've been exploring it ever since."

What happened to you? "I was jumped by a dragon. It nearly had me, but I managed to escape back into this tomb. I was looking for some sort of magic or tool to help defeat the dragon, entered that damnable room, and that was that."

What is this place? "I believe it is one of the great tombs of the Wind Dukes. It would appear that it is none other than Icosiol's tomb, in fact."

Who was Icosiol? "He was one of the greatest generals of the Wind Duke army—one of the seven so-called Wandering Dukes, champions of Law who forged a powerful artifact called the *Rod of Law*, and used it to end the war against the Queen of Chaos. That defeat shattered the rod, transforming it into what is known today as the *Rod of Seven Parts*."

Why are you exploring this tomb? "Isn't that obvious? This place is important. A powerful general is entombed here, and a lot of powerful magic is entombed with him. The Wind Dukes had a habit of burying their weapons with their dead in the months after the their victory over Chaos. Not to honor the dead as much as to store these weapons in a safe place, so that should Chaos rise again, the weapons would be available to them. I believe that something powerful indeed is hidden somewhere in this tomb, and

I believe it can help us in the dark times that face us today. Plus... how could I resist exploring a place like this?"

Allustan becomes distraught if the PCs tell him his home has been ruined, but he regains his composure quickly enough, stoically reminding himself that at least he's still alive and he had the foresight to bring a traveling spellbook with him. He handles news of Eligos's murder stoically as well, observing that they have all stumbled into something bigger than all of them. If given Eligos's note, he agrees that it might be time to go speak with his one-time master, the infamous archmage of Magepoint—Manzorian.

But first, Allustan asks the PCs to continue exploring Icosiol's Tomb, encouraging them to seek out any weapons or magic that the Wind Dukes may have hidden herein—such resources will certainly come in handy in the future! As for Allustan, feel free to use him in any way you wish. If you think the PCs could use a little extra help, he could accompany them on their further explorations of the tomb. If the PCs have done well so far, Allustan may wish to return to Diamond Lake to see about rebuilding his home. One thing should be clear, though—the PCs have now grown more powerful than their old friend. He may once have been a mentor and a guardian, but here in Icosiol's Tomb he may actually become a liability.

ALLUSTAN **CR 8**

Male human wizard 8
N Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Spot +6, Listen +6
Languages Common, Elven, Dwarven

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15; Dodge
hp 29 (8 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk dagger +4 melee (1d4–1/19–20)
Ranged mwk dagger +7 ranged (1d4–1/19–20)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +3
Combat Gear *wand of magic missiles* (CL 5th, 8 charges)
Spells Prepared (CL 8th, +6 ranged touch):
4th—*dimension door*, empowered *scorching ray*, *stoneskin*
3rd—*deep slumber* (DC 18), *dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 18), *fly*
2nd—*resist energy*, *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*, *web* (DC 17)
1st—*charm person* (DC 16), *identify*, *magic missile*, *magic weapon*, *shield*
0—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *read magic*
Spellbook: Allustan carries a traveling spellbook with all his currently prepared spells.

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 18 (20), Wis 14, Cha 10
SQ familiar (none currently)
Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Dodge, Empower Spell, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll
Skills Concentration +12, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (planes) +13, Listen +6, Spellcraft +18, Spot +6
Possessions combat gear, masterwork dagger, *amulet of natural armor +1*, *bracers of armor +3*, *ring of protection +1*, *headband of intellect +2*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *pearl of power* (1st), 2 doses of diamond dust worth 250 gp each, 225 gp.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Give the PCs experience as if they had defeated a CR 12 creature if they rescue Allustan.

15. Flooding Tunnel Trap (EL 10)

The stairs leading down from the northern chamber end at a pit. This room's floor lies forty feet below the bottom step, and sparkles with an intricate pattern of scarlet tiles that create a swirling mosaic. A set of metal rungs protrudes from the wall just below the stairs. Two hallways extend out of the room at ground level below—one to the east and one to the northeast.

Trap: This area contains a dangerous trap. The floor of the small chamber directly south of area **14** is a large pressure plate that triggers once at least 50 pounds of pressure are put on it. After a delay of 2 rounds, an iron panel slides out of the wall at the base of the stairs, sealing this room off from area **14** to the north and cutting any ropes hanging down into this room. Characters within 5 feet can leap to the other side of the door with a DC 15 Reflex save.

Once the passageway to area **14** seals, the secret doors to the northeast and east open. Unfortunately for the occupants of this room, the northeast door opens into the river bed. A wall of red water surges down the tunnel, into this chamber, and then sluices down the second tunnel toward area **20**.

Once the secret doors open, the PCs have a single round to react. At the end of this round, the waters of the river cascade into this room, filling the chamber to a depth of 10 feet and washing anything inside out to area **20**. The waters carry loose objects and PCs along at a speed of 20 feet toward area **20**. A DC 20 Swim check is required to navigate these turbulent waters, and those who try to swim "upriver" must spend 20 feet of movement for that round just to overcome the current. A creature next to a protrusion (such as a ladder rung, a wall corner, or a spike driven into the ground) can cling to that protrusion with a DC 15 Strength check; failure indicates the character is washed away.

Anyone washed into area **20** faces a long fall—see the description of that area for details.

Flooding Tunnel Trap: CR 10; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; multiple targets (all creatures in the tunnel); floodwaters (see above for mechanics); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

16. Under the River (EL 11)

This river's current flows at a speed of 20 feet. It's a DC 15 Swim check to swim these waters, but each round, the current carries swimmers 20 feet closer to area **20**. The river is 10 feet deep and there's always at least 10 feet of headroom between the river surface and the cavern ceiling above.

The smaller dead-end tributary to the northeast of the main river is sheltered from the current. Here, the water is much more shallow, ranging from 5 feet deep in the southern arm to only a foot deep in the northern spur. The ceiling height here is 15 feet above the water surface. Characters moving in the shallows can do so as if through difficult terrain.

At the furthest reach of the eastern arm of these side tunnels, the temperature drops alarmingly and the languid waters change to red ice. A DC 20 Spot check allows a character to notice that a 7-foot-diameter patch of ice on the ceiling is actually only a few feet thick, and a larger chamber can be seen through the cloudy red ice. With a bit of work, it's possible to hack a hole in this ice to gain access to area **17** above.

To the west, the ceiling soon dips down to the surface, making it difficult to navigate for air-breathing creatures. In any event, the river itself soon narrows down to impassible cracks in the rock, as water leaches into the area through a network of high-mineral strata from aquifers far above.

Ice Sheet: 3 ft. thick; Hardness 8 (fire bypasses); hp 60; Break DC 40.

Creatures: Intrigued by the naturally red waters of this lake, the Wind Dukes decided to place a pair of unusual undead guardians within this area to prevent unwanted intrusions into the tomb via the river. These two guardians remain here still—a pair of blood amniotes. Huge clots of animate blood, these ooze-like undead monstrosities are mindless guardians that react with violence to anything that enters this area. The blood amniotes have amorphous bodies, and can move around these tunnels with ease and without penalty. Driven by an inescapable craving for blood, they slither out of this area if they notice anyone in the river to the south. Although they do not pursue food underwater, they can climb along walls with shocking ease and thus pursue victims anywhere in the tomb.

The blood amniotes often travel downriver to feed in the underdark, and have wiped out entire kuo-toa caravans in the past. Ancient commands from long-dead Wind Dukes ensure the undead return to this area before long, however.

Blood Amniotes (2) **CR 9**

N Huge Undead

Libris Mortis 87

Init +5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Listen –5, Spot –5

AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 21

hp 65 (10 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 10/—

Immune ooze traits, undead traits

Fort +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee slam +7 (2d6+6 plus blood call)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +17

Atk Options blood call

Abilities Str 19, Dex 20, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

SQ self spawn

Blood Call (Su) Whenever a blood amniote strikes a living creature, its touch causes the target's body to expel a portion of its own blood through the pores. This blood gathers and flows across the intervening distance between the prey and the blood amniote. This attack deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage to the foe.

Self Spwan (Su) Once a blood amniote drains as many points of Constitution as its full normal hit point roll, it splits into two identical blood amniotes, each with a number of hit points equal to the original blood amniote's full normal total. Both of these blood amniotes are only 8 points away from self spawning.

17. Hall of Ice (EL 11)

This hall is cold. Crusted red ice cakes the floor and walls, and two large humanoid statues of the stuff stand at each end, their frozen scarlet surfaces scribed with smoking white runes.

The floor of this hallway is caked with slippery ice, the result of ancient magic placed by the architects of this tomb to honor the memory of the creature entombed in area **18**. It costs 2 squares of movement to enter any square in this hall, and the DC of Balance and Tumble checks increases by 5. A DC 10 Balance check is rquired to run or charge across the ice.

Creatures: The two rune-covered figures are ice golems, left here to guard the entrance to Sionsiar's tomb (area **18**). One golem stands at either end of the hall, and both animate and close to attack any intruders.

Ice Golems (2) **CR 9**
N Large construct (cold)
Frostburn 137
Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0
AC 22, touch 9, flat-footed 22
hp 96 (12 HD); **DR** 10/bludgeoning
Immune cold, magic
Fort +4, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4
Weakness vulnerable to fire
Spd 30 ft.; icewalking
Melee 2 slams +15 (2d8+7)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +20
Atk Options improved grab (slam)
Special Atk ice shards
Abilities Str 25, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1

Ice Shards (Su): As a free action once every 1d4+1 rounds, an ice golem can generate a spray of ice shards from its body, dealing 2d6 points of piercing damage and 1d6 points of cold damage to all creatures within 10 feet. Living creatures damaged by this attack must make a DC 16 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d4 rounds.

Icewalking (Ex): This ability works like *spider climb* but applies to all icy surfaces—an ice golem can move normally on any icy surface.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): An ice golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. Fire spells and effects affect the golem normally, even if they permit spell resistance. A magical attack that deals cold damage heals an ice golem of 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage such an attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points.

18. Sionsiar's Tomb

This room has a low ceiling, about eight feet high, and is caked with ice. The air is strangely cold. Where the floor should be is nothing more than a slowly churning pool of almost liquid snow and slush.

One of the greatest resources utilized by the Wind Dukes were elemental weirds—strange beings of elemental energy that have potent gifts of prophecy and prescience. The weirds did not dispense their prophecies for free, and the Wind Dukes often had to bring mighty gifts and offerings to them when they sought advice for the defeat of the Queen of Chaos.

Icosiol formed a close bond with one such oracle, a snow weird named Sionsiar. It was in large part due to her predictions and advice that Icosiol's exploits during the Chaos War were so successful. Alas, the snow weird perished in one of the final battles, when desperate agents of the Queen of Chaos launched an offensive against the weirds in an attempt to cut the Wind Dukes off from their potent advice. Distraught by Sionsiar's death, Icosiol made arrangements to have her interred in his tomb in this chamber.

The snow pool is less than half the size of a standard elemental weird's pool—15 feet across and 10 feet deep. A character who enters the pool immediately takes 1d6 points of cold damage per round and must make a DC 15 Swim check to keep from sinking. This pool is the source of the cold that suffuses this room and area **17**.

Additionally, the snow pool is strongly infused with forces of law. A chaotic creature exposed to the pool's cold must make a DC 15 Will save each round to avoid suffering 1d6 points of Charisma drain as their personality is frozen and muted. A lawful creature exposed to the pool's cold instead gains a +4 enhancement bonus to his Charisma score as the ice purifies his body and mind. This bonus persists for 24 hours before fading. These effects are generated by Sionsiar's spirit, and can be banished forever if *dispel law* is cast on the pool.

19. The Passage of Honor (EL 11)

This hall is watched over by six statues of Wind Duke nobles—three against each wall. The central statue to the east stands before a stone door. The statues all have cupped hands in front of them, and floating on a cushion of air above these hands are intricate carvings of strange buildings and towers. The statue before the door does not hold a carving. The air here is cold, and moves in faint whispers. A passageway to the north opens into a large room lined with red ice, sheets of which extend along the floor of this room.

Each of these statues bears the likeness of one of Icosiol's fellow Wandering Dukes. Their cupped hands cradle miniature statuettes of magnificent Vaati buildings constructed by ancient architects. These figurines rest upon a soft current of air immediately above the statues' cupped hands.

The chamber to the east of this room was originally intended to be a tomb for Icosiol's son, but the collapse of the Wind Duke empire saw to it that his son's body was lost and never placed within.

The floor of this room is caked with ice—see area **17** for details on how this impacts movement.

Creature: Only five of these statues are real. The "statue" that stands in front of the eastern door is in fact a guardian—a kolyarut inevitable. The kolyarut has been bound to this chamber to serve as an eternal guardian. It uses *disguise self* to appear as one of the five statues and stands motionless before the eastern door,

waiting for the opportunity to defend the approach to Sionsiar's Tomb.

The kolyarut's first action in combat is to take a move action to trigger a hidden lever (DC 25 Search to locate) that drops an iron portcullis down over the north and south entrances to this chamber, attempting to split the party by trapping some of them in the room. It then moves to attack, opening with *enervation* rays and following up with *vampiric touches*. It is not armed with a magic sword, and switches to its slam attack only if its *vampiric touches* seem ineffective.

Kolyarut Inevitable: hp 91; *Monster Manual* 159.

Treasure: Each of the five statuettes held by the statues is worth 100 gp.

20. The Falling River (EL 13)

The red river plummets over the edge here, cascading down a thirty-foot-diameter pit with a roar. There's some room to maneuver around and climb the walls on the far side of the waterfall, where many narrow ledges beckon, but the stone is all very slick. The spray and mist make it impossible to tell how long the waterfall descends into the darkness below. Above, the vast cavern arches upward into darkness.

It should be fairly obvious to even casual observation that this cavern is immense in its depth. It's possible to start the climb down along the walls of the cavern, since at first there are plenty of handholds and footholds. The ledges are horribly slick, though. Navigating these ledges and climbing down requires a DC 15 Climb check.

This deep tunnel of cave stone descends for hundreds of feet, and not entirely in a straight line. Characters who cannot fly should find navigating this cavern extremely perilous. The cave walls leading upward from this area are drier, but also have no ledges to speak of—climbing up is a DC 25 Climb check. Ultimately, the cavern leads up for about 500 feet before ending in a vaulted ceiling with no other exits.

The Falling River is the path to Icosiol's true tomb, the entrance of which is

hidden about 400 feet down. The cavern itself bottoms out at 750 feet in area **21**. Consult the map of the Falling River to track the PCs progress down this vertical cavern, or to determine how much falling damage a character takes if he slips and falls. A few key points along the cavern deserve special mention.

First Narrows. The cavern narrows to a diameter of 20 feet only 60 feet down from area **20**, which means the spray of water is more dangerous, making climbing difficult for 25 feet—it's a DC 20 Climb check to navigate this stretch.

The Lake. A very high ceiling here makes this an excellent spot for an aerial ambush. The wind warriors (see Creatures, below) stage their first attack here, utilizing their crossbows from range before flying down deeper into the cavern to the Cascade to stage their second defense. The crimson waters of the river gather in a dark lake here that is home to legions of small white crabs who eat what little food drops down with the waterfall. There is nothing of interest in the lake.

The Basin. There are no beaches to move around on in this section of cavern, so PCs must either swim or climb along walls to navigate further.

The Cascade. The waterfall hits a series of projections here, creating lots of mist, cascading water, and difficult climbing due to the spray of water. It's a DC 20 Climb check to navigate this 75-foot stretch. This is also the location of the second assault on the party by the wind warriors—this time, they engage the PCs in melee. They do not pursue the PCs if they continue deeper into the caverns below, but do their best to prevent them from reaching the stairs.

The Stairs. This approach hides the true entrance to Icosiol's Tomb (area **23**). The entrance to this flight of stairs is hidden by a secret door that can be found with a DC 30 Search check. A lawful creature that carries the *Seal of Law* automatically notices this secret door, seeing its outline flare with soft white light.

Second Narrows. Again, the tunnel is only 20 feet wide for a short stretch, channeling the water's energy and filling most of the passageway with either water or mist.

It's a DC 20 Climb check to navigate this 30-foot-long stretch of spelunking.

Creatures: A group of elemental soldiers, foot-soldiers in the Wind Duke army ages ago, guards this cavern. These are wind warriors like the ones the PCs may have fought in the Whispering Cairn, although these warriors are much more powerful than their lesser kin.

The wind warriors fight anyone not holding the *Seal of Law*, which is currently at the bottom of this abyss (see area **21**). Because the cavern is only about 30 to 40 feet across but hundreds of feet deep, the best way to represent this encounter on a map is to draw a 30-foot-wide corridor on a map and represent a PC's or wind warrior's vertical position within the shaft by their position along that corridor. In other words, make the horizontal tabletop stand in for the vertical shaft for this encounter.

ADVANCED WIND WARRIORS (6) **CR 8**

N Medium elemental (air, extraplanar)

DUNGEON #124 47

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Auran (cannot speak)

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 14

hp 117 (14 HD)

Immune elemental traits

Fort +6, **Ref** +17, **Will** +4

Spd 30 ft., fly 80 ft. (good)

Melee mwk longsword +15/+10 (1d8+3/19–20) and mwk longsword +15 (1d8–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +17/+12 (1d8/19–20)

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +13

Special Atk sonic blast

Abilities Str 16, Dex 22, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 11

SQ body suffusion, superior two-weapon fighting

Feats Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Balance +8, Jump +5, Tumble +23
Possessions 2 masterwork longswords, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts

Sonic Blast (Su): As a standard action, a wind warrior can clang its longswords together to produce a discordant sonic blast in a 20-foot line. This effect deals 2d6 sonic damage to all within the area (Reflex DC 19 half). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Body Suffusion (Ex): A wind warrior's spirit keeps its body together. If disarmed, its weapons age thousands of years in an instant, crumbling to dust before they hit the floor. At any time thereafter, the wind warrior may generate a replacement weapon as a standard action.

Superior Two-Weapon Fighting (Ex): A wind warrior's essence suffuses its entire body, granting it supreme control over its movements. Wind warriors do not take a penalty on attack or damage rolls for attacking with two weapons.

21. The Star Chamber (EL 13)

The red waterfall crashes into a pool of jagged rocks in this large cave at the bottom of its descent. An outlet of slow-moving reddish water that seems almost black gurgles away to the south. The cavern beyond is large and wet, longer in the north-south direction and roughly fifty feet east to west. A pale greenish-yellow light reflects off the river and walls downstream, perhaps a hundred feet away to the north—the same light flickers and refracts off tiny crystals in the roof above, almost giving this cavern the feel of being open to the night sky.

This large cavern has always existed deep under Icosiol's Tomb, yet at the time of the tomb's construction access to this chamber was much more difficult, possible only through a narrow underwater channel. In time, the waterfall eroded a larger passageway through to this cave, which is part of the vast network of caverns known as the Underdark.

Creature: The current occupant of this chamber is a refugee from a region deep below the surface ruled by a society of the undead. This nation is known as the White Kingdom, and its citizens and rulers are true ghouls, unruled by the feral hunger and mindless savagery present in their lesser, far more common kin.

The reason for Moreto's exile from the White Kingdom is tied to current events on the surface world. In his studies, Moreto learned of a powerful undead dragon that once dwelt on the surface world. This was Dragotha, and according to several prophecies he discovered in worm-eaten texts, the undead dragon would soon stir, awaken, and usher in the advent of a new time of writhing decay. Moreto had discovered the prophecies of the Age of Worms. Intrigued, he tried to convince the rulers of the White Kingdom to fund an expedition to the surface world to investigate the prophecies, for if indeed this Age of Worms was nigh, perhaps the true ghouls of the White Kingdom could return to the world above. Yet the rulers of the White Kingdom did not share Moreto's interest in returning to the surface—the Underdark suited them just fine. They branded Moreto a heretic and exiled him and his servants. Moreto knew that the closest route to the surface was said to parallel the River of Blood. His journey upward has been taxing, and now two mohrgs are all that remains of his once formidable band.

Moreto suspects he is very close to the surface, and even managed to make it all the way up into Icosiol's Tomb a few weeks ago. He began looting rooms, knowing

that he would need wealth to re-establish himself on the surface, and managed to reach area **10** without much problem by using *command undead* and *halt undead* to hold back the tomb's guardians. There, he discovered an item that radiated potent magic indeed—the *Seal of Law*. As he took the *Seal*, the shadow spider Flycatcher finally arrived and attacked. Their battle ended in a draw, with both managing to inflict grievous wounds on the other, but Moreto still managed to escape back to this cavern with the *Seal of Law*. Since then, he's been studying and investigating the relic, hoping to find a way to use it against Flycatcher and finally reach the surface world above.

If the PCs are carrying light sources with them or are particularly loud, chances are that Moreto notices their approach. He recalls his two remaining mohrgs to his side and sneaks toward the PCs to spy on them. When he sees that the PCs aren't shadow spiders, he presents himself to them and lets the PCs make the first move, be it an attempt to parlay or an attack.

If the party is diplomatic and approaches more-or-less openly, Moreto treats them as guests (he's bored silly). He's especially amused if they are wet and injured, but offers to use *prestidigitation* to clean them up. Moreto's initial attitude toward the PCs is indifferent. His only real desire is to reach the surface and seek out Dragotha, but he knows better than to reveal his plans to strangers. Instead, he plays the part of an explorer while he pumps the PCs for information about Icosiol's Tomb, Flycatcher, and the surface world.

If the party made a deal with Flycatcher to kill Moreto and they admit as such to the true ghoul, he laughs and makes a counteroffer. He'll give the PCs the *Seal of Law* if they agree to kill the spider. If made friendly, he even volunteers to aid the PCs in the fight against Flycatcher. Note that although Moreto knows the words to speak to safely handle the *Seal of Law*, he may "forget" to teach them to the PCs if they annoy him.

It's possible that Moreto doesn't notice the characters' arrival. If the PCs catch him unawares, they find him perched on a boulder studying the *Seal of Law* by ghoul-light.

Moreto, Marquis of Ravenstone CR 11
Male noble true ghoul sorcerer 8/fighter 2
LE Medium Undead
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., lifesense 60 ft.; Listen +9, Spot +13
Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal, Undercommon

AC 23, touch 17, flat-footed 18
hp 57 (70 with *false life* active) (14 HD)
Immune undead traits
Fort +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +14

Spd 30 ft.
Melee *+2 greatsword* +17/+12 (2d6+11/17–20) and
bite +12 melee (1d6+3 plus paralysis and ghoul fever)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +14
Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm
Combat Gear *wand of enervation* (14 charges), *wand of halt undead* (20 charges), *potion of inflict moderate wounds* (4)
Spells Prepared (CL 8th, ranged touch +13)
4th (4/day)—*lesser globe of invulnerability*
3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic, lightning bolt* (DC 20)
2nd (8/day)—*command undead* (DC 19), *false life*, levitate*
1st (8/day)—*charm person* (DC 18), *expeditious retreat, feather fall, mage armor*, magic missile*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash, dancing lights, detect magic, disrupt undead, ghost sound* (DC 17), *mending, prestidigitation, read magic*
*Already cast once today

Abilities Str 23, Dex 20, Con —, Int 16, Wis 19, Cha 25
SQ spectral transformation, summon familiar (bat named Eyrix), +4 turn resistance
Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Extend Spell, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Disarm, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (greatsword)
Skills Balance +8, Bluff +15, Climb +17, Craft (weaponsmith) +11, Diplomacy +9, Hide +15, Jump +13, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Move Silently +10, Spellcraft +17, Spot +13
Possessions combat gear, *+2 greatsword, cloak of the bat, ring of protection +2, ghoul-light lantern* (see appendix), *Seal of Law*, 5 rare books on magical theory and prophecy worth 500 gp each, files for sharpening teeth and claws

Mohrgs (2): hp 91 each; *Monster Manual* 189.

Tactics: If the PCs attack, Moreto is more than ready to respond in kind: his *ghoul-light lantern* grants him protection from invisible or stealthy approaches, and his morghs and summoned undead can keep most groups at bay long enough for Moreto to cast his defensive spells in the opening rounds of combat.

If Moreto is reduced to fewer than 15 hit points he breaks off combat and attempts to flee back into the Underdark, intending to seek an alternate route to the surface. He abandons the *Seal of Law* in this case, hoping that his pursuers will be distracted by the valuable-looking relic long enough for him to make good his escape.

If Moreto is killed he'll immediately become a spectre. He is driven mad by the transformation due to the fact that, as he died in exile, he is now barred from entering the Ghostly Court. He does his best to eliminate the PCs in this event, fighting to his own destruction.

Development: While it's possible that the PCs enter an alliance with Moreto, keep in mind the fact that he is a despicable and cruel undead menace. Once he's secured a route to the surface, the best the PCs can hope for is to be abandoned by him. It's more likely that he'll hang around long enough to ambush or abduct one of the PCs, using magic like *charm person* to ensure their servitude.

22. Entrance to the True Tomb

The walls and floor of this cave have obviously been partially finished by stoneworkers. More impressive by far are the massive, fifty-foot-tall doors to the north. These dull black doors are carved with both gigantic and tiny runes, some at eye level and others much larger. The metal of the door seems pristine and freshly forged.

The doors are made of stone but encased in adamantine plates. The runes on the door are written in Vaati and comprise combinations of Icosiol's personal glyph and a series of curses

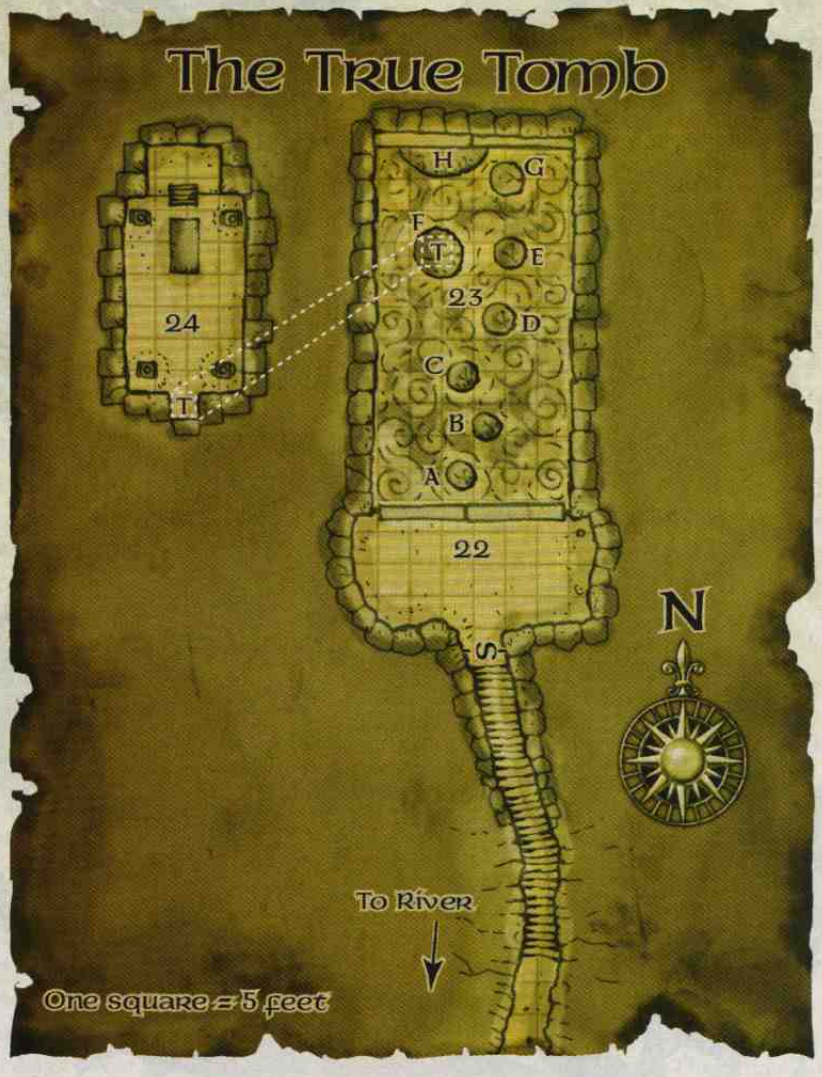
against Chaos. One phrase in particular is inscribed in a place of prominence just over the massive handles. Written in Vaati as well, this phrase reads, "Dare not enter the tomb of Icosiol, Lord of Aaqa, Wandering Duke, and Bearer of the Rod of Law." His righteous peace and glorious memory are best left to the ages, and his enemies are best left forever sleeping."

These symbols of Law are imbued with potent magic, and duplicate the effects of an *antipathy* spell (caster level 17) as long as the doors remain closed. The *antipathy* only affects creatures with a chaotic alignment—these creatures must make a DC 21 Will save or be unable to approach within 20 feet of the doors. Even if they make the save, their Dexterity scores are reduced by 4 as long as the doors remain closed and in sight.

The doors themselves are sealed with a permanent *arcane lock* (caster level 17). Note that the extreme size of the doors prevents *knock* from being able to open them. The *arcane lock* must be dispelled or bypassed (or the doors themselves destroyed) if the PCs wish to pass beyond them.

Any character that holds the *Seal of Law* aloft before the doors suddenly feels a sense of weightlessness as several words manifest in his mind. These words are "Aaqa" (the name of the Wind Duke empire), "Icosiol" (the name of the Wind Duke entombed within), and "Pesh," the volcanic plain on which the Wandering Dukes defeated the army of Chaos. Speaking these three names aloud in this order causes the doors to swing soundlessly open and remain open until they are physically closed or the carrier of the *Seal of Law* speaks the three words again.

Tomb Doors: 5-foot-thick stone plated with 1-inch-thick adamantine; Hardness 20; hp 980.



23. The Rising Path (EL 12)

This chamber contains seven stone columns, each slightly taller than the next, rising slowly from the entrance to a small platform at the far end of the room before a second set of enormous doors. No floor is visible—in its place is a pit filled at a depth of eighty feet with glowing blue fog. Swirling patterns of wind and lightning dance and howl along the walls and ceiling of the chamber, filling the room with a tumultuous roar.

Each of the seven columns appears slightly different. The closest column's top is level with the ground in the entrance room to the west. The next column is two feet higher. The third rises up to the ceiling forty feet above. The fourth is three feet higher than the second one, but rotates slowly in place. The fifth column's upper surface seems to be covered with a thick layer of what looks like tar, and is about one foot higher than the last. The sixth column is two feet higher than the previous one but is made of a lighter colored stone. A larger column, nearly twice the diameter of the others, stands to the left of the main row.

This chamber was built to impress upon both visitors and tomb robbers alike the true power and strength of the wind and the lightning at the Wind Dukes command. The columns themselves form a path of sorts to the far side of the room. Navigating the columns is a dangerous prospect, made moreso by the presence of two greater air elementals charged with preventing any creatures in the room from using flight to defeat the room's obstacles.

Each of the columns is labeled with a letter; specific qualities of each are summarized below. Check page 77 of the *Player's Handbook* for a list of Jump DCs.

Column A: This section is just 5 feet from the entryway.

Column B: This column is 2 feet higher than A, and 7 feet away from it.

Column C: A *permanent image* disguises this pillar. While it is in fact only a foot higher than column B, the illusion makes it appear that the column extends all the way to the ceiling. A character who interacts with the illusion (such as by trying to throw a rock at the pillar) can disbelieve it with a successful DC 19 Will save. Characters who try to jump onto this column but do not disbelieve the illusion suffer a –5 penalty on their Jump check.

Column D: This entire column rotates slightly, and its top is about a foot higher than column C's top. Jump checks onto it suffer a –5 penalty, and each round a character stands on this column he must make a DC 12 Balance check to keep his footing. Failure by 5 or more indicates the character falls off.

Column E: The tar-like substance smeared on top of this column is in fact a magically elastic coating of sludge. A creature that stands or lands on this stuff bounces and finds keeping his footing quite difficult. Each round, a creature standing on this column must make a DC 20 Balance check to avoid falling off. Jump checks made from this pillar gain a +10 circumstance bonus.

Column F: This larger column marks the actual entrance to Icosiol's tomb. A DC 20 search of the column's surface finds a shallow circular indentation in the center. This indentation is the same width as the *Seal of Law*. Placing the *Seal of Law* in this indentation causes the pillar to rise up at a rate of 5 feet per round toward the ceiling above. The pillar stops its ascent at a point 10 feet below the ceiling, at which point anyone standing on or above the *Seal of Law* is lifted up through an *illusory wall* in the ceiling above, arriving in the westernmost alcove of area 24. Characters nearing the ceiling in this manner are protected from the hurricane-force winds and the lightning on the walls, but those who pass through this opening without using the *Seal of Law* are not. Once this entrance has been activated, it remains active for one hour, even if the *Seal of Law* is removed from the room.

Column G: This column is made of unstable stone. If any amount of weight in excess of 25 pounds is placed upon it, the column crumbles to dust. A creature on the column can make a DC 20 Reflex save to get a chance to leap to a nearby column.

Column H: This column abuts the two large adamantine doors at the far end. Unfortunately, these doors are false and do not open. Any attempt to force them to open causes the elementals to attack.

Any character that falls into the fog-filled abyss below plummets 500 feet into a featureless stone pit, suffering 20d6 falling damage on impact. The glowing blue fog fills most of this pit, obscuring vision beyond 5 feet. It's a DC 25 Climb check to scale the walls back up.

Any non-elemental approaching within 5 feet of the north or south walls or the ceiling is struck by a blast of hurricane-force wind and a bolt of lightning. The lightning deals 10d6 electrical damage, or half on a DC 20 Reflex save. The blast of wind has different effects depending on the target's size and whether he's flying or not—see page 95 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details.

Creatures: Two greater air elementals serve as this chamber's wardens. They remain hidden in the fog 45 feet below, gaining a +20 circumstance bonus on Hide checks for a net total of +22 on their Hide checks (remember to account for distance penalties when having the PCs make Spot checks to see the elementals).

If anything tries to "cheat" this room by flying, or once they are spotted, the elementals fly up out of the fog to attack the party. They prefer to attack non-flying targets, and use their whirlwind attacks to capture these creatures and then drop them into the pit below.

Greater Air Elementals (2): hp 178; *Monster Manual* 96.

24. Icosiol's Mausoleum (EL 13)

This chamber is modestly sized but has a very high ceiling: nearly sixty feet high. The room is lit by elongated metal lanterns that glow with the colors of the rainbow. A white marble sarcophagus floats in the air at the far end of the room, ten feet off the floor. The sarcophagus bottom is carved with an image of a sleeping Wind Duke, two swords resting on his chest and a winged helmet at his feet.

The walls are carved to depict a funeral procession that winds up in a spiral, showing Wind Dukes, djinni, air elementals, and other elemental servants of Law in mourning as they attend the body of a fallen general. After the first spiral, the upper sections show the general's ascension into a primal vortex of wind and thunder. Many-eyed abominations, frog-like humanoids, and tentacled demons are trampled beneath his feet as he rises into a golden doorway at the end of the fresco.

This is the burial chamber of the Wind Duke Icosiol. There is relatively little of interest in this austere chamber save for the sarcophagus itself.

A search of the sarcophagus reveals that there seems to be no way to open it; there is no lid. The carving on the top side depicts the same sleeping Wind Duke seen on the underside (Icosiol), but this carving's hands are empty and protrude out of the top and seem to be carved as if to hold an object. Placing the *Seal of Law* in these hands causes the sarcophagus to lower to the ground. One round later, the top of the sarcophagus fades away, leaving the *Seal of Law* suspended in the air above Icosiol's remains below. The sarcophagus can also be battered open with force, or by spells like *disintegrate* or *stone shape*.

Icosiol's Sarcophagus: 6-inch thick stone; Hardness 8; hp 90; Break DC 32.

Creatures: Of course, Icosiol's tomb is not ungarded. Before the PCs can place the *Seal of Law* and gain the blessing of Icosiol's spirit, they must first defeat the creature of chaos that has been bound to this chamber to serve as its eternal guardian. This guardian is an ancient fiend known as Augerric, an oculus demon from the primal Abyss. Augerric lurks in the western alcove under the cloak of *invisibility* and *mirror image*. When he notices the PCs enter the room, he immediately attacks them with eyebolts. Doing so makes him visible, which of course exposes the party to his paralytic gaze. Augerric uses *invisibility* to position himself for advantageous uses of his spell-like abilities or eyebolts during combat, but if directly engaged in melee he has no qualms about fighting back with his physical attacks.

Augerric, Oculus Demon: hp 187; see Appendix.

Treasure: Icosiol's body is nothing more than dust and fragments of bone now, but several potent-looking items remain within his tomb. These are a *ring of the Wind Dukes*, a *lightning Sword*, a *sword of Aaqa*, and a fragment of a strange metal rod. This is, in fact, the final portion of the infamous *Rod of Seven Parts*. All four of these objects are magic items of great power. If the PCs claim them, they feel a momentary rush of anger and jealousy, but this rush quickly gives way to a feeling of peace and welcome. The spirit of long-dead Wind Duke Icosiol can feel the impending doom that is the Age of Worms, and understands that the weapons of the Vaati must be used once again to fight against the encroaching dark. His blessing settles over the PCs with a soft sigh and a feeling of contentment and support. From this point on, none of the traps or guardian monsters in Icosiol's tomb will harm the PCs, with the exception of Flycatcher.

If any of the PCs is carrying the inactive *talisman of the sphere* they may have found in the Whispering Cairn, that PC instinctively knows that this item has been restored to full functionality by Icosiol's blessing. Likewise, if Zosiel's silver diadem is present, Icosiol's blessing restores this ancient item to its full potential as well, transforming it into a *circlet of Wisdom +4* that functions also as a *circlet of persuasion* and grants its wearer the ability to speak and understand Auran. If the owner of the diadem tries to sell the item, Icosiol's blessing fades and it becomes a *circlet of Wisdom* +2 again.

Ad Hoc Experence Award: If the PCs recover the treasures kept here and earn the respect of the Wind Dukes, award them experiance as if they had defeated a CR 15 creature.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure ends as the PCs recover the fragment of the *Rod of Seven Parts* and return to Diamond Lake. They find the townsfolk worried and nervous. Even proof of Ilthane's death does little to brighten their spirits. The miners and knaves of Diamond Lake can feel in their bones that things are about to change, and likely not for the better.

Allustan himself is understandably morose and depressed about the turn of events. The recovery of the *Rod of Seven Parts* fragment and the other Wind Duke treasures brightens his mood a bit, but even these mighty treasures can't fix his ruined home, the lives lost to Ilthane's attack, or the seemingly unstoppable advance of the Age of Worms. Allustan may be the smartest man in Diamond Lake, but as he looks upon the ruins of his home and the once-desperate characters who have become true heroes in their own right, he realizes that his role in the developing saga has come to an end. There is only one more thing he can do to aid the PCs. He can show them the way to his one-time mentor, the archmage Manzorian. Allustan encourages the PCs

to take what they know to Manzorian's home to the north in the coastal village of Magepoint. Surely the archmage can help put an end to the threat?

Allustan himself retreats into his studies, in search of further information, and begins to strengthen his home with wardings and magical fortifications. A great darkness is close at hand, and the wizard fears what is to come. For the PCs, this adventure marks a turning point. No longer are they in the dark. No longer are they forced to react to the machinations of Kyuss' dark plans. Soon, they shall gaze upon the Spire of Long Shadows, and the sinister origin of Kyuss himself shall be laid at their feet.

APPENDIX I: NEW MONSTERS

True Ghoul

Medium Undead
Hit Dice: 4d12+3 (29 hp)
Initiative: +3
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class: 19 (+3 Dex, +4 chain shirt, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple: +2/+6
Attack: Longsword +6 melee (1d8+4/19–20)
Full Attack: Longsword +6 melee (1d8+4/19–20) and claw (1d4+2 plus paralysis) and bite +4 melee (1d6+2 plus paralysis and ghoul fever)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Ghoul Fever, paralysis
Special Qualities: Darkvision 120 ft., lifesense 60 ft., spectral transformation, +4 turn resistance, undead traits
Saves: Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6
Abilities: Str 19, Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 18
Skills: Balance +6, Climb +10, Hide +8, Jump +6, Move Silently +8, Spot +9
Feats: Multiattack, Toughness
Environment: Underdark
Organization: Solitary, pair, troupe (2–5 plus 1–3 ghast servants), patrol (7–12 plus 1 noble), slaving expedition (13–24 plus 1d6 underpriests and 1 priest), or legion (70–120 plus 2d6 underpriests, 1d6 priests, and 1d10 nobles)
Challenge Rating: 3
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always neutral evil
Advancement: By character class
Level Adjustment: —

His clothes are the genteel, rotted garments of a generation ago, and he speaks in the tones of a reasonable man. His skin is sallow, almost parchment-like in texture. Only his taloned fingers, black split tongue, and cruel hooked teeth betray his deep corruption.

True ghouls (also called shadow ghouls or greater ghouls) are much more human than common ghouls and ghasts. They are as well-spoken and cultured as they are utterly ruthless and evil. True ghouls have pale skin, sharp teeth, a long black tongue and sunken eyes. Unlike most undead, the true ghouls are not the product of necromantic tinkering or magic. They are evolved ghouls who have managed to overcome their bestial and feral natures, or at the very least, have learned to control them.

True ghouls speak Undercommon. These creatures originally appeared in *Dragon* #252, and were featured in *Dungeon* #70's "Kingdom of the Ghouls" adventure. DMs seeking more information concerning true ghouls and the White Kingdom they rule are encouraged to seek out these sources.

Combat

True ghouls are organized, canny fighters who seek to gain surprise whenever possible. Whenever possible, they send slaves and minions (troglodytes, drow, goblins, undead, or other slave races) into battle first, to throw their enemies into disarray and weaken them. They are capable of marching tirelessly, and use this ability to surprise their enemies both offensively and defensively.

Although a true ghoul's bite and claws are formidable natural attacks, they prefer to wield weapons in combat, if only to express their superior culture above their base and feral kin. They prefer longswords in combat. Nevertheless, a true ghoul is quick to use its bite and offhand claw attacks to augment its swordplay. They prefer light armor, but only rarely use shields.

Ghoul Fever (Su): Disease—bite, Fortitude DC 16, incubation period 1 day, damage 1d4 Con and 1d4 Cha per day. The save DC is Charisma-based.

An afflicted humanoid who dies of ghoul fever rises as a ghoul at the next midnight. A humanoid who becomes a ghoul in this way retains none of the abilities it possessed in life. It is not under the control of any other ghouls, but it hungers for the flesh of the living and behaves like a normal ghoul in all respects. A humanoid of 4 Hit Dice or more rises as a ghast.

Paralysis (Ex): Those hit by a true ghoul's bite or claw attack must succeed on a DC 16 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d6+1 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Lifesense (Ex): True ghouls can sense life energy within 60 feet well enough to locate living creatures, even in magical darkness. When a true ghoul detects life, the exact location of the source is not revealed—only its presence somewhere within range. The true ghoul can take a move action to note the direction of the life. Whenever the true ghoul comes within 5 feet of the source, the true ghoul pinpoints the creature's location. A true ghoul with the Track feat can follow tracks of living creatures with this ability, making a Wisdom (or Survival) check to find or follow a track and ignoring the effects of surface conditions and poor visibility. The typical DC for a fresh trail is 10. This DC increases or decreases depending on the number of creatures and the age of the trail. For each hour that the trail is cold, the DC increases by 4. The ability otherwise follows the rules for the Track feat.

Spectral Transformation (Ex): When a true ghoul is slain, its animating force tears free of its body, manifesting as a glowing, green phantom of the ghoul. This spectral force is usually harmless and fades away to nothingness over the course of one round. If the true ghoul in question was a noble, this phantom manifests instead as a free-willed spectre that can immediately attack its enemies. The spectre does not retain any class abilities that the true ghoul may have had in life. True ghoul spectres often retire to roles of advisor to other true ghoul nobles—these spectres are known as the Ghostly Court.

Priests and Underpriests

The god of the true ghouls is unknown to most outsiders. It is often called the Lord of Rot and Shadow, or simply the Charnel God. Many scholars believe the creature is an Abyssal Lord, though others believe it is some form of greater yugoloth. In fact, this divine power is an ancient and mysterious deity named Mordiggian.

True ghoul clerics of Mordiggian gain access to the domains of Death, Evil, and Knowledge. If you use *Libris Mortis* in your campaign, his clerics also gain access to the Hunger and Undeath domains. Clerics of 4th-level or lower are called underpriests. Those of 5th–level or higher are known as priests. True ghoul priests are experts at constructing, commanding, and destroying golems of all types, especially stone and bone. They have a love for automatons of all kinds, and many are experts at creating new types of constructs and necromantic servants.

Nobles

The deepest reaches of the Underdark hide the mysterious White Kingdom, a nation populated entirely by true ghouls. The leaders of this kingdom are nobles who have risen above even their kin. If you use *Libris Mortis*, many true ghoul nobles possess the evolved undead template. Moreto, the true ghoul noble encountered in this adventure, is a minor noble and does not have this template. True ghoul nobles typically have class levels as sorcerers, fighters, bards, or rogues. They often wear mithril or adamantine plate armor and wield the most powerful magic weapons they can find, with a preference for greatswords, greataxes, longswords, and halberds.

Ghoul nobles are often on good terms with vampires, liches, yugoloths, and creatures from the Plane of Shadow. They display great talent in necromancy, constructing undead war machines and battering rams from animated corpses.

Oculus Demon

Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil)
Hit Dice: 15d8+120 (187 hp)
Initiative: +9
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 70 ft. (good)
Armor Class: 28 (+9 Dex, +9 natural), touch 19, flat-footed 19
Base Attack/Grapple: +15/+21
Attack: +1 *unholy longsword* +22 melee (1d8+7/19–20) and 3 eyebolts +24 ranged touch (2d8 plus special)
Full Attack: +1 *unholy longsword* +22/+17/+12 (1d8+7/19–20) and claw +16 melee (1d6+3) and 3 eyebolts +24 ranged touch (2d8 plus special)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Eyebolts, paralyzing gaze, spell-like abilities
Special Qualities: All-around vision, damage reduction 10/cold iron and good, darkvision 60 ft., immune to electricity, immune to fire, immune to poison, negative energy affinity, resist acid 10, resist cold 10, spell resistance 24
Saves: Fort +17, Ref +18, Will +9
Abilities: Str 23, Dex 28, Con 26, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12
Skills: Concentration +26, Diplomacy +3, Hide +27, Intimidate +19, Listen +18, Move Silently +27, Search +26, Sense Motive +18, Spot +26
Feats: Dodge, Improved Critical (longsword), Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Shot on the Run
Environment: Infinite Layers of the Abyss
Organization: Solitary, pair, flock (3–8)
Challenge Rating: 13
Treasure: Double standard plus +1 *unholy longsword*
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: 16–23 HD (Medium), 24–35 HD (Large), 36–45 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment: —

The demon blinked a hundred eyes at once, a sign of assent. The thing's eyes were in its head, its neck, its shoulders, and tiny rolling eyes in its fingertips—and with each step, the tiny eyes on the soles of its feet squelched and popped.

The oculus demon is a creature of ancient days, long ago sworn to serve the Demon Queen of Chaos before the rise of the tanar'ri. Also called "thousand-eye demons," most were destroyed during the Battle of Pesh and subsequent forays against their strongholds and settlements by the Wind Dukes of Aaqa. Rumors of the source of their creation

Scaling the Adventure

"A Gathering of Winds" is designed for a group of four 11th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 9th–10th level characters or 12th–13th level characters. Simply adjust all NPC character levels up or down as appropriate by a number equal to that which the average party level of your group deviates from 11. Increase or decrease the Search and Disable Device DCs for all traps by the same amount. Don't forget to modify the amount of treasure found in the adventure appropriately. Specific changes to the adventure include:

9th–10th-level characters: Make Ilthane a standard adult black dragon. Remove 1–2 belkers from area **2**. Remove Smoughed from area **5**. Make the elder black pudding in area **7** a 15-Hit Die Huge black pudding. Replace the dread wraith in area **10** with a 12-Hit Die wraith. Remove 1 or 2 xorns from area **11**. Remove one of the relief golems from area **13**, one of the blood amniotes from area **16**, and one of the ice golems from area **17**. Replace the kolyarut inevitable in area **19** with a 1st-level fighter zelekhut inevitable. Reduce the wind warriors in area **20** by 1 or 2. Remove one or both of the mohrgs from area **21**. Remove one of the greater air elementals from area **23**. Replace the oculus demon in area **24** with a hezrou demon.

12th–13th-level characters: Advance Ilthane's hit dice by 1–2. Add 2–4 belkers to area **2**. Give Antyress Redpike in area **5** 1–2 fighter levels, or give him a second Huge fire elemental companion. Advance the elder black pudding in area **7** by 4–8 Hit Dice. Add a second dread wraith to area **10**. Replace the six xorns in area 11 with four or five elder xorns. Add a third relief golem to area **13**, a third blood amniote to area **16**, and a third ice golem to area **17**. Give the kolyarut inevitable in area **19** 1–2 levels of fighter. Advance the wind warriors in area 20 by 4 Hit Dice. Replace the greater air elementals in area **23** with elder air elementals. Advance the oculus demon in area **24** by 2–4 Hit Dice.

abound, with perhaps the most fantastic claiming that the first oculus was the byblow of a liaison between a gibbering mouther demigoddess and an ancient giant of a hundred eyes, perhaps with a drop of beholder blood somehow added into the mix.

Oculus demons stand at roughly human height, though much broader through the shoulders. Their posture is hunched, and all such demons have either two or four horns, depending on their gender. In males, the two horns are straight and long, in female demons the four horns are round and the tips often touch over their heads. Some oculus demons have eyestalks in addition to horns. A very few have a sort of crown of eyeballs all the way around their skull; these demons are driven from the Abyss to seek their fortunes elsewhere.

Oculus demons always have dozens or (in extreme cases) hundreds of eyes. In cases where they have relatively few, they sometimes tattoo faces featuring those eyes in the expected location. Oculus demon skin is rubbery, with chitinous plates covering their shoulders and a helmet-like skull. In some such demons, these plates can slide over their most exposed eyes to protect them.

Oculus demons speak Abyssal.

Combat

Oculus demons prefer ranged combat, using spell-like abilities and eyebolts to strike at foes. They prolong this stage of combat as long as possible, and for this reason usually serve demonic armies as ranged support and scouts rather than as foot troops.

Once hand-to-hand combat begins, they wield a cruel, curved longsword in one hand. This longsword is almost always a +1 *unholy longsword*. Their off-hand claw and bite give them secondary attacks, and they can continue to use their eyebolts even in close range without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Eyebolt (Su): As a free action that doesn't provoke an attack of opportunity, an oculus demon can project three separate beams of pale gray negative energy from any three of the eyes that cover its body. Each ray has a range of 70 feet. On a successful ranged touch attack, an eyebolt inflicts 2d8 points damage from negative energy. This damage heals undead creatures in the same way an *inflict wounds* spell does.

A creature that takes damage from an eyebolt must make a DC 25 Fortitude save to avoid the mind-numbing fear and nausea the energy inflicts on living souls. On a failed save, the victim's body becomes wracked with pain and fever—the creature becomes sickened and takes a –2 penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks. These effects persist for 1 hour, or until they are removed by anything that removes a fear effect.

A creature that is already sickened by an eyebolt becomes panicked for 1d4 rounds if struck by another eyebolt and it fails to make the DC 25 Fortitude save.

A creature that is already panicked by an eyebolt is rendered unconscious if struck by another eyebolt and it fails to make the DC 25 Fortitude save. A DC 20 Heal check or any form of magic healing restores consciousness to the victim; otherwise, he remains unconscious for 1d4 hours.

These additional eyebolt effects are mind-affecting necromantic fear effects.

Paralyzing Gaze (Su): Paralysis for 1d4 rounds, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 18 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Spell-Like Abilities (Sp): At will—*greater arcane sight, blindness/deafness* (DC 13), *detect law, dispel magic, invisibility, dimension door, protection from law, tongues, true seeing, vampiric touch*. 3/day—*dispel law, chaos hammer* (DC 15), *mirror image*. Caster level 15.

All-Around Vision (Ex): An oculus's many eyes give it a +8 racial bonus on Search and Spot checks, and they can't be flanked.

APPENDIX II: NEW MAGIC

Ghoul-Light Lantern

These eldritch lanterns are used by true ghouls to light their cities and to augment their undead minds. Although they can see in the dark, they find the necromantic green glow of the ghoul-light comforting. A *ghoul-light lantern* can be command to shed its sickly green glow as a move action. Once activated, the glow illuminates a 20-foot radius and provides shadowy illumination out to a 40-foot radius. Living flesh illuminated by ghoul-light feels strangely cold and clammy, while undead within the light feel more energetic. Any living creature within 20 feet of a source of ghoul-light takes a –1 penalty on Will saves and all Charisma checks (including turn undead checks and all Charisma-based skills). Undead within 20 feet of a source of ghoul-light gain a +1 profane bonus on Will saves and Charisma checks.

Ghoul-light is treated as bright illumination against creatures with light sensitivity (such as drow).

All creatures exposed to ghoul-light begin to glow softly themselves with the nasty green light. This glow does not provide additional illumination, but it does affect all creatures within 20 feet of the source as if by *faerie fire*, thus reducing the effectiveness of *invisibility, displacement*, and similar effects.

Faint evocation; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, creator must be a true ghoul; Price 5,000 gp; Weight 2 lb.

Lightning Sword

The *lightning sword* is a +2 *shocking burst mithral short sword*. Used by the Wind Duke Icosiol on the battlefield of Pesh, the *lightning sword* is the companion blade to the *sword of Aaqa*. The *lightning sword's* pommel is a single huge star sapphire that glitters with electrical energy. Three times per day by drawing the *lightning sword*, the wielder can gain the effects of a *fly* spell (caster level 9). This effect springs into being as part of the act of drawing the sword.

If the wielder fights with the *lightning sword* and the *sword of Aaqa*, he may strike the two swords together as a standard action to generate 30-foot line of sonic energy. All creatures in this area take 6d6 sonic damage (Reflex DC 18 half). This ability can be used three times per day.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *call lightning* or *lightning bolt, fly*; Price 35,000 gp.

Ring of the Wind Dukes

This heavy platinum ring is set with four large, pale blue sapphires and carved with the crisp runes of Law. The *ring of the Wind Dukes* bestows one negative level on any chaotic creature that wears it. The negative level remains as long as the ring is worn and disappears when it is not. This negative level never results in actual level loss, but it cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells) while the ring is worn.

As long as it is worn, the wearer ignores the effects of strong winds and gains resistance to electricity 10. Once per day he may use *charm monster* against any creature with the Air subtype. Elementals suffer a –4 penalty on saving throws against this effect.

Once per day as a standard action, the wearer of the ring can transform into a 60-foot-long line of lightning. All creatures in this line suffer 10d6 points of electrical damage (Reflex DC 14 halves). The wearer returns to physical form at the opposite end of the line of lightning.

Strong abjuration, enchantment, and evocation; CL 12th; Forge Ring, *charm monster, lightning bolt, resist energy*; Price 40,000 gp.

Rod of Seven Parts (Major Artifact)

This great artifact of Law was forged eons ago by the Wind Dukes for use in their war against the Queen of Chaos. It was sundered into seven parts during the battle of Pesh, and its fragments scattered across the multiverse. Over time, fragments of the *Rod of Seven Parts* have surfaced here and there, often in times of great need. Unfortunately, the *Rod of Seven Parts* remains unstable, and once its purpose is served it fragments anew, its components scattering, often returning to the site of Wind Duke tombs or ruins (as is the case of this fragment).

The fragment found in Icosiol's tomb comes from the tip of the original rod. The fragment measures 15 inches long, and it can be used to cast *heal* once per day.

A nonlawful character who possesses a single segment of the Rod must make a DC 17 Will save each week to avoid becoming lawful. A lawful character who holds a segment of the Rod and thinks of it as part of a larger item can determine in what direction the next-larger segment lies by making a successful DC 20 Concentration check. Unfortunately, this segment is the largest fragment of the rod, and so cannot be used to find the others.

The powers of the remaining fragments (as well as the resonating powers possessed by the reconstructed rod) can be found on page 154 of the *Arms & Equipment Guide.*

CL 20th; Weight 1 lb.

Seal of Law (Major Artifact)

Icosiol's personal glyph and seal is a disc of crystal about a foot in diameter, carved from a single large quartz crystal and polished to a glossy finish. One is engraved with three runes; a symbol representing Pesh, the Last Battlefield, the circular sign of the Wind Duke armies, and Icosiol's personal rune. These runes are in ancient Vaati—translated, they mean "Pesh," "Aaqa," and "Icosiol." The other side of the seal depicts a wind duke holding the *Seal of Law* up before a pair of massive black doors while standing on a floating disc of air about the same size as the seal itself.

Any non-elemental creature touching the *Seal* without first speaking the three runes carved into it summons creatures from the Plane of Air to punish the transgressor. The first time in a day this occurs, the *Seal* summons 1d4 djinn. The second time, it summons 1d4 invisible stalkers. The third time, it summon 1d4 greater air elementals. Summoned monsters persist for 2 minutes, during which time they focus all their rage on the creature responsible for their summoning. Attempts to handle the *Seal* after the third summoning in a day are not met with reprisal.

The *Seal's* primary function is to serve as a key of sorts to allow safe entrance into Icosiol's Tomb. If taken far beyond the boundaries of Icosiol's Tomb, the Seal becomes dormant and nonmagic until it is returned to the tomb.

CL 20th; Weight 8 lb.

Sword of Aaqa

The *sword of Aaqa* is a *+2 axiomatic mithril long sword* with a hilt set with six pale sapphires the size of grapes. Used by the Wind Duke Icosiol on the battlefield of Pesh, the *sword of Aaqa* is the companion blade to the *lightning sword.* Whenever the wielder scores a critical hit on a creature with the *sword of Aaqa* (even if that creature is normally immune to damage from critical hits), the sword creates a powerful blast of windstorm-force wind. The creature hit can make a DC 18 Fortitude save to resist the effects of the wind. Small or smaller creatures (or flying Medium creatures) are blown away by this blast of wind. Creatures on the ground are knocked down and roll

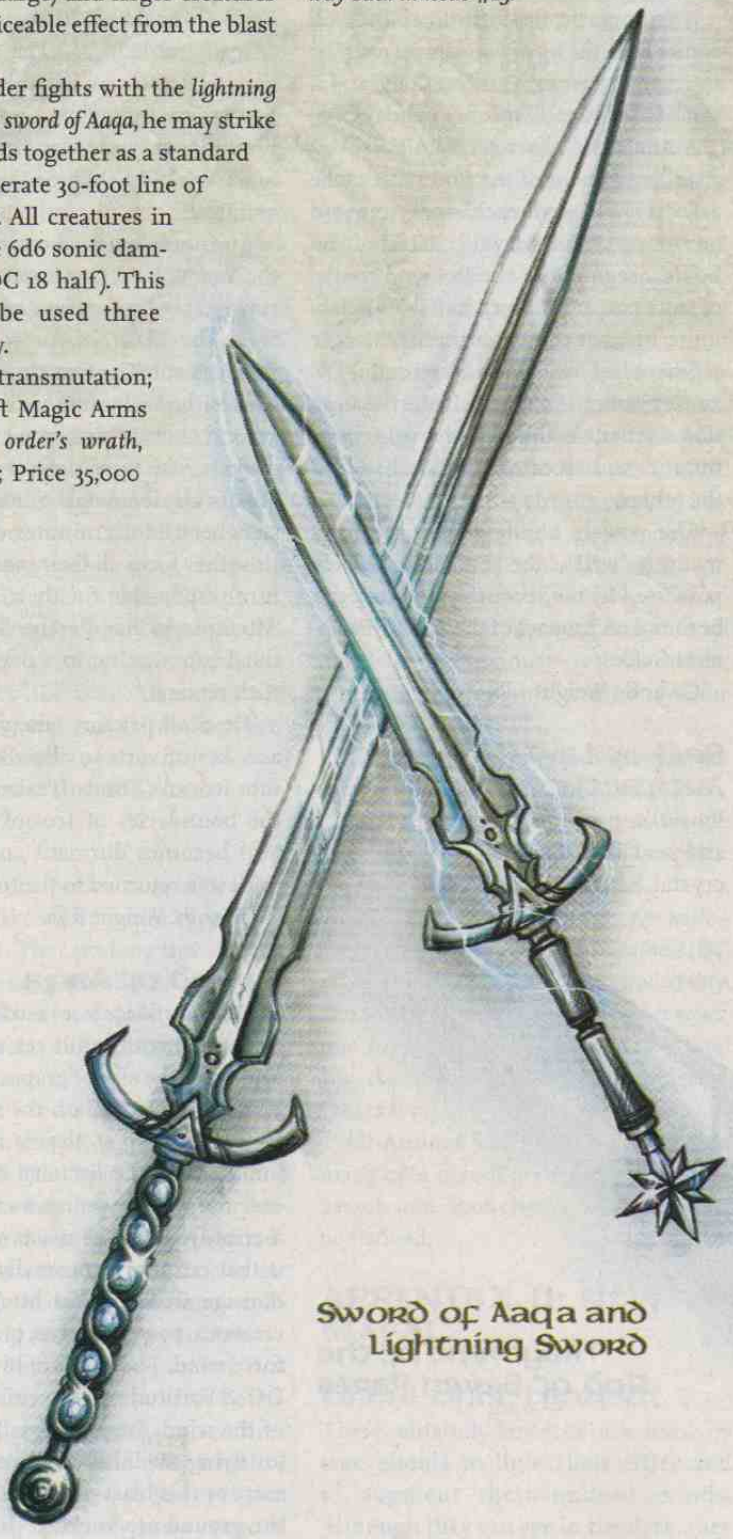
Fragment of the Rod of Seven Parts

1d4x10 feet, taking 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per 10 feet. Flying creatures are blown back 2d6x10 feet and take 2d6 points of nonlethal damage. Medium creatures (or flying Large creatures) that fail this save are knocked down. Huge (or land-bound Large) and larger creatures suffer no noticeable effect from the blast of wind.

If the wielder fights with the *lightning sword* and the *sword of Aaqa*, he may strike the two swords together as a standard action to generate 30-foot line of sonic energy. All creatures in this area take 6d6 sonic damage (Reflex DC 18 half). This ability can be used three times per day.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *order's wrath*, *control winds*; Price 35,000 gp.

Wolfgang Baur is a game designer responsible for more than his share of ghouls, necromancers, genies, and assassins. His most recent stand-alone project is the Book of Roguish Luck *for Malhavoc Press. This is his tenth appearance in* DUNGEON, *a run that started way back in issue #15.*



Sword of Aaqa and Lightning Sword

THE TWISTED RUN

BY BY WIL UPCHURCH
BY ERIC DESCHAMPS AND DOUG WILLIAMS
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI
FORGOTTEN REALMS, HIGH LEVEL (13–20), URBAN AND WILDERNESS

Faerûn's Northlands have always been a dangerous frontier. The frozen woods and treacherous mountains are home to orcs, trolls, lycanthropes, and worse. When the High Lady of the Silver Marches brought the northern nations together, the Beastlord Malar could no longer watch as his wilderness slowly became civilized. The god called upon his most worthy follower, the barbarian anth-Malar, and suffused him with his divine essence. Anth-Malar wasted no time in using his newfound power to bring devastation and chaos to all who defile the wilderness.

"The Twisted Run" is a FORGOTTEN REALMS adventure designed for four 17th-level characters. Although it is set in Faerûn's Northlands, this adventure is easily adaptable to any wilderness region near a populous city, and is scaleable for levels 15–19. This adventure is a sequel to "Forest of Blood," which originally appeared in *DUNGEON* #103. While it is not necessary to have played "Forest of Blood" to enjoy "The Twisted Run," DMs looking to provide their players with a fuller experience may wish to seek out this back issue.

Adventure Background

Anth-Malar, the Chosen of Malar, has labored long to gather the forces of the Beastlord and prepare them for the Furious Hunt, an all-out assault on the Silver Marches. Utilizing a concoction first created by the evil druid Kazok, anth-Malar has discovered a way to catalyze the transformation caused by a lycanthrope's bite in seconds rather than days. The resulting blacktooth lycanthropes are much more powerful than their normally afflicted cousins, but anth-Malar has been unable to maintain the virulent strain past the first generation. Still, an attack on a large city could produce hundreds of lycanthropes in a matter of hours, enough to overrun even Silverymoon, Gem of the North.

Anth-Malar's primary lair is a shrine to Malar called the Twisted Run, a maze of passageways and caverns northeast of Silverymoon. It didn't take him long to discover the dwarven settlement of Deg Shanat, whose lower level lay remarkably close to the Twisted Run. Anth-Malar considered the dwarven town the perfect place to test his new strain of lycanthropy. He placed sentries above ground around the complex, and then broke through the foundation of the citadel. Lycanthropy ravaged the dwarves before they could mount a successful defense or even think to flee, and all anth-Malar had to do was wait while those who were not immediately afflicted slowly transformed

into his minions. But while anth-Malar consolidates his power in Deg Shanat, a renegade lycanthrope wizard named Duallen has decided to get a head start on the invasion.

On the eve of anth-Malar's assault, the goddess Selûne decides to intervene. She sends visions to the High Lord of Silverymoon, Taern Hornblade, indicating that Malar is about to go on the offensive throughout the North. Although he is concerned, Taern cannot spare any of his city's defenders to seek out the Twisted Run to find out what anth-Malar is planning. Spurred into action by the renegade wizard, he turns to the adventurers.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins in Silverymoon, as a park in the Hunter's District is terrorized by three powerful blacktooth dire wolverines. Following clues left by the beasts and the guidance of Selûne, the PCs track anth-Malar to an old dwarven smithy and waystation. Once there, they discover a shrine to the Beastlord populated by evil shapeshifters who plot to sow chaos and destruction across the Silver Marches. In order to stop a plague of lycanthropy from sweeping Silverymoon, the PCs must put an end to anth-Malar's threat by destroying him and the source of his power.

Adventure Hooks

If your characters have adventured in the Silver Marches for any part of their adventuring career, they have likely encountered the threat of lycanthropes and other followers of Malar before. Ideally, they have played through the events outlined in "Forest of Blood" and are thus familiar with the blacktooth paste, and possibly the greater threat of anth-Malar. Assuming the PCs have made a name for themselves in the region or in Silverymoon, Taern contacts them as soon as Selûne sends him visions. Their return to Silverymoon comes just before the werewolverine attack in the Hunter's District.

It is possible to run this adventure without involving the characters in the divine war being waged over the Silver Marches. They might have another reason to travel to the dwarven stronghold of Deg Shanat, and come to find it overrun by lycanthropes from the Twisted Run.

You can use one of the following adventure hooks to involve the characters in anth-Malar's plans.

- Duallen was not the only messenger sent from Deg Shanat at the beginning of anth-Malar's attack. An old ally of the PCs was in Deg Shanat (either as a guest or permanent resident) at the time of the attack and left to contact them in hopes that they could help the beleaguered dwarves.
- The characters are known enemies of the People of the Black Blood and other Malarite forces. After Duallen attacks Silverymoon, High Moonmistress Shalyssa Lurialar contacts them from the Temple of the Silver Stars via a *sending*, asking them to "Please come to Silverymoon immediately. The forces of Malar are poised to attack the Silver Marches and your help could be vital to our survival."
- The characters are passing through the Moonlands or the Silverymoon Pass and plan to make a stop at Deg Shanat for supplies and information about the road ahead. Before they get there they are attacked by three unusual werewolverines (use "Attack in the City" below), and once they arrive they find the outpost overrun by minions of Malar.

CHAPTER ONE: SAVING SILVERYMOON

The characters' first stop is Silverymoon, whether they are just visiting between adventures or have been summoned as heroes of the land by Taern Hornblade. If the characters have not had a chance to explore Silverymoon before, you might want to allow them to take in the grandeur of the city before springing the first encounter on them. If they are veterans of the Gem of the North, they might want to visit old friends, make use of the city's wide array of magical resources, or relax and catch up with NPCs at their favorite inn. In any case, the matter of Taern's visions does not become urgent until the attack, so feel free to let your players relax and shop as much as they want.

SILVERYMOON

Silverymoon (metropolis): Magical; AL CG; 100,000 gp limit; Assets 185,365,000 gp; Population 37,073; Integrated (humans 41%, elves [all types] 29%, half-elves 12% shield dwarves 10%, lightfoot halflings 5%, gnomes [all types] 2%, others 1%).

Authority Figures: **High Lady Alustriel**, CG female human wizard 20/sorcerer 2/archmage 2, Chosen of Mystra (High Lady of the Silver Marches), **High Mage Taern Hornblade**, LG male human wizard 18 (ruler of the city).

Important Characters: **Jorus Azuremantle**, LG male half-elf wizard 12 (leader of the Spellguard); **Methrammar Aerasumé**, LG male half-elf fighter 7/wizard 9 (High Marshal of the Argent Legion); **Sernius Alathar**, LG human male fighter 4/paladin 8 (commander of the Knights in Silver).

Notes: Silverymoon and its wards are more fully detailed in the *Silver Marches* sourcebook.

SILVERYMOON'S WARDS

The wards of Silverymoon, powerful magic tied to the city's *mythal*, are a significant reason the city has blossomed in the harsh frontier of the North. They prohibit the use of certain types of magic by anyone not attuned to their magic or carrying a ward token. The following spells (and magic items that reproduce them) are wasted (charges and spell slots are still lost, but have no effect) if cast anywhere in Silverymoon:

Spells with the death descriptor
Spells with the evil descriptor
Spells with the teleportation descriptor
Conjuration (summoning) spells
Evocation [fire] spells

In addition, the following effects are always active just like spells tied to a *hallow* spell:

Antipathy to all evil-aligned demons, devils, dragons, drow, duergar, giants, goblinoids, mind flayers, orcs, and trolls
Death ward
Detect scrying
Invisibility purge
Protection from evil

Attack in the City (EL 19)

As the attack on Deg Shanat got underway, several dwarves were dispatched to Silverymoon with a plea for help. Unfortunately, anth-Malar's sentries, including a first-generation blacktooth dire werewolverine, got to them first. The werewolverine managed to bite a dwarven wizard named Duallen Teirgar, who quickly succumbed to the curse and turned on his guards. The newly formed lycanthropes escaped into the nearby hills, where they spent several days hunting, scavenging for equipment, and getting used to their new forms.

The dwarves have now fully succumbed to the evil of the curse. While most of the band has returned to Deg Shanat to serve anth-Malar, Duallen and two of his former guards decided to *teleport* just outside of Silverymoon, bearing a devastating plague rather than a word of warning.

This attack can take place anywhere and at any time you choose, even as the characters are on their way to the High Palace to seek an audience with Taern Hornblade. The attack works best in a reasonably out of the way location, since an attack in the Market or an open park would quickly call down the wrath of the Spellguard and Knights in Silver. In fact, if the battle goes against the PCs or lasts for more than 10 rounds, several of the city's defenders do show up to help subdue the lycanthropes (and take any infected characters into custody). These Silveraen should all have ward tokens and liberally call upon the powers of Silverymoon's *mythal*. This is a good chance to showcase the magic of the city to characters who might not have experienced it before.

Creatures: These three werewolverines, like all of the lycanthropes in this adventure, are dwarves. Their goal is to infect as many people as possible with blacktooth lycanthropy, in hopes that the plague quickly spreads throughout the city, creating chaos and anarchy that they can then exploit.

Duallen Teirgar (Dwarf Form) CR 18

Male dwarf blacktooth dire werewolverine wizard 13

Monster Manual 170

CE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Spot +10, Listen +10

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 25

hp 77 (92 with *false life*) (18 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 10/admantine

Resist cold 30; **SR** 28

Fort +16 (+18 vs. poison), **Ref** +11, **Will** +17 (+2 vs. spells)

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 *quarterstaff* +10/+5 (1d6+1)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +10 (1d8/19–20)

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +9

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 13th, +17 to overcome SR, +9 ranged touch)

7th—*forcecage*

6th—*globe of invulnerability*, quickened *mirror image*

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *cone of cold* (DC 21), quickened *ray of enfeeblement*, *teleport**

4th—*Evard's black tentacles*, *confusion* (DC 20), *ice storm*, *shout* (DC 18), *stoneskin**

3rd—*dispel magic*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19) (2), *slow* (DC 19)

2nd—*false life**, *glitterdust* (DC 18), *Melf's acid arrow*, *resist energy**, *see invisibility**, *web* (DC 18)

1st—*feather fall*, *mage armor* (3)*, *magic missile*, *shield*

0—*daze* (DC 16), *detect magic* (2), *ghost sound*

* already cast

Abilities Str 11, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 22, Wis 10, Cha 9

SQ alternate form, dwarf traits, lycanthropic empathy, summon familiar (rat)

Feats Alertness, Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (claw), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration, Toughness, Track

Skills Climb +6, Concentration +22, Craft (alchemy) +17, Gather Information +1, Hide +2, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +18, Knowledge (history) +16, Knowledge (local) +12, Listen +10, Move Silently +2, Spellcraft +22, Spot +10

Possessions combat gear, *+1 quarterstaff, ring of protection +2, amulet of natural armor +1, cloak of resistance +3, headband of intellect +2*, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, 1,500 gp worth of ruby dust, 500 gp worth of diamond dust

Spellbook as above plus 0—all; 1st—*burning hands, charm person, color spray, sleep*; 2nd—*command undead, knock, scorching ray*; 3rd—*blink, fly, nondetection*; 4th—*dimension door, dimensional anchor, polymorph*; 5th—*dismissal, summon monster V*; 6th—*analyze dweomer, create undead*; 7th—*limited wish*

Curse of Blacktooth Lycanthropy (Su): See Blacktooth Lycanthropy sidebar on page 75.

Alternate Form (Su): In hybrid form, Duallen cannot cast any spells with verbal components, and his statistics change as follows:

CE Large humanoid (shapechanger)
Init +3
AC 31, touch 14, flat-footed 28
hp 149 (164 with *false life*); fast healing 5; **DR** 10/silver, magic, and adamantine
Fort +20 (+22 vs. poison) **Ref** +14
Melee 2 claws +14 (1d8+6) and bite +9 (2d6+3 plus curse of blacktooth lycanthropy)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Grp +19
Abilities Str 23, Dex 16, Con 21
Skills Climb +20, Concentration +26, Move Silently +5

Alternate Form (Su): In dire wolverine form, Duallen cannot cast spells with verbal, somatic, or material components, and his statistics change as follows:

CE Large humanoid (shapechanger)
Init +3
AC 28, touch 12, flat-footed 27
hp 149 (164 with *false life*); fast healing 5;**DR** 10/silver, magic, and adamantine
Fort +17 (+19 vs. poison) **Ref** +11 **Will** +14
Spd 40 ft., climb 10 ft.
Melee 2 claws +14 (1d8+6) and bite +9 (2d6+3 plus curse of blacktooth lycanthropy)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Grp +19
Special Atks rage
Abilities Str 23, Dex 16, Con 21
Skills Climb +20, Concentration +26, Move Silently +5
Possessions Duallen cannot use or carry any of his possessions while in dire wolverine form.

Rage (Ex): If Duallen takes damage while in dire wolverine form he flies into a berserk rage on his next turn, clawing and biting madly until either he or his opponent is dead. Duallen cannot end his rage voluntarily. While Duallen is raging, his statistics change further as follows:

AC 26, touch 10, flat-footed 25
hp 185 (200 with *false life*); fast healing 5; **DR** 10/silver, magic, and adamantine
Fort +19 (+21 vs. poison)
Melee 2 claws +16 (1d8+8) and bite +11 (2d6+4 plus curse of blacktooth lycanthropy)
Grp +21
Abilities Str 27, Dex 16, Con 25
Skills Climb +22, Move Silently +5

BLACKTOOTH RANGER (2), HYBRID FORM CR 15

Male dwarf blacktooth dire werewolverine ranger 10
Monster Manual 170
CE Large humanoid (shapechanger)
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Spot +16, Listen +17
Languages Common, Dwarven

AC 34, touch 15, flat-footed 30
hp 179 (15 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 10/silver and magic
Resist cold 10; **SR** 25
Fort +18 (+20 vs. poison) **Ref** +17 **Will** +10 (+2 vs. spells); evasion

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Spd 40 ft.
Melee warhammer +21 (2d6+9/x3) or warhammer +19/+14/+9 (2d6+9/x3) and Medium *+1 silvered dwarven waraxe* +19/+14 (1d10+4/x3) and bite +16 (2d6+4 plus curse of blacktooth lycanthropy) or 2 claws +21 (1d8+9) and bite +16 (2d6+4 plus curse of blacktooth lycanthropy)
Ranged Medium *+1 composite longbow* +15/+10/+5 (1d8+4/x3)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +26
Atk Options favored enemy (humanoid [elf] +6, animal +4, aberration +2)
Combat Gear *potion of blur, potion of bull's strength, potion of cure serious wounds*
Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 5th)
2nd—*barkskin**
1st—*longstrider**, *resist energy**
* already cast

Abilities Str 28, Dex 18, Con 24, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ alternate form, dwarf traits, lycanthropic empathy, swift tracker, wild empathy +11, woodland stride
Feats Alertness, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Natural Attack (claw), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Track, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe)
Skills Climb +17, Handle Animal +12, Knowledge (nature) +12, Listen +17, Spot +16, Survival +14
Possessions combat gear, warhammer, Medium *+1 silvered dwarven waraxe*, Medium *+1 composite longbow* (+3 Strength), *ring of protection +2, boots of the winterlands, brooch of shielding* (101 charges)

Curse of Blacktooth Lycanthropy (Su): See Blacktooth Lycanthropy sidebar on page 75.

Alternate Form (Su): In dwarf form a blacktooth ranger's statistics change as follows:

CE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)
Init +1
AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 26
hp 119; fast healing 5
Fort +14 (+16 vs. poison) **Ref** +14
Spd 40 ft.
Melee *+1 silvered dwarven waraxe* +18/+13/+8 (1d10+5/x3)
Ranged *+1 composite longbow* +15/+10/+5 (1d8+4/x3)
Space 5 ft. **Reach** 5 ft.
Grp +16
Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16
Skills Climb +3

Alternate Form (Su): In dire wolverine form the blacktooth ranger's statistics change as follows:

AC 31, touch 13, flat-footed 27
Spd 50 ft., climb 10 ft.
Melee 2 claws +21 (1d8+9) and

BLACKTOOTH LYCANTHROPY

Blacktooth lycanthropy is a new acquired template that can be applied to any giant or humanoid. The differences between blacktooth lycanthropy and normal lycanthropy (*Monster Manual* 170) are listed here:

Size and Type: Same as normal lycanthropy.

Speed: Same as normal lycanthropy, but a blacktooth lycanthrope receives a +10 bonus to his base speed in all forms.

Armor Class: The base creature's natural armor bonus increases by +8 in all forms. In hybrid form, the lycanthrope's natural armor bonus is equal to the base creatures natural armor bonus +8 or the base animal's natural armor bonus +8 (whichever is better).

Base Attack/Grapple, Attacks, and Damage: Same as normal lycanthropy.

Special Attacks: A blacktooth lycanthrope retains the special attacks of the base creature or base animal, depending on which form it is using, and also gains the special attack described below.

A blacktooth lycanthrope's hybrid form does not gain any special attacks of the base animal. A blacktooth lycanthrope spellcaster cannot cast spells with verbal, somatic, or material components while in animal form, or spells with verbal components in hybrid form.

Curse of Blacktooth Lycanthropy (Su): Any humanoid or giant hit by a first-generation blacktooth lycanthrope's bite attack in animal or hybrid form must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or contract blacktooth lycanthropy. Victims who succumb to the disease suffer their first involuntary transformation one minute after failing the save. If the victim's size is not within once size category of the blacktooth lycanthrope's base animal, the victim is immune to this effect. Second-generation or younger blacktooth lycanthropes spread the standard curse of lycanthropy as other natural lycanthropes.

Special Qualities: Same as normal lycanthropy, except the blacktooth lycanthrope gains the additional special qualities below.

Damage Reduction (Ex): A blacktooth lycanthrope in animal or hybrid form has damage reduction 10/silver and magic.

Darkvision (Ex): A blacktooth lycanthrope in animal or hybrid form has 60-foot darkvision.

Spell Resistance (Ex): A blacktooth lycanthrope has spell resistance equal to 10 plus its hit dice.

Base Save Bonuses: Same as normal lycanthropes.

Abilities: All blacktooth lycanthropes suffer a –2 penalty to their Wisdom scores. The blacktooth fungus dulls the natural cunning of the base creature, even as it increases its ferocity. In addition, when in animal or hybrid form, a blacktooth lycanthrope's physical ability scores improve by an amount equal to the base animal's physical ability scores –10 (for even scores) or –11 (for odd scores).

Skills: Same as normal lycanthropy.

Feats: Same as normal lycanthropy, except that blacktooth lycanthropes gain Improved Natural Attack with all the animal's natural attacks, in addition to Iron Will as bonus feats, even if they do not meet the prerequisites.

Environment: Same as either the base creature or the base animal.

Challenge Rating: By class level or base creature, modified according to the Hit Dice of the base animal: 1–2 HD, +4; 3–5 HD, +5; 6–10 HD, +6; 11–20 HD, +7; 21 or more HD, +8.

Treasure: Standard.

Alignment: Always chaotic evil.

Advancement: By character class.

Level Adjustment: Same as base creature +5. In addition, a blacktooth lycanthrope's character level is increased by the number of racial Hit Dice the base animal has.

bite +16 (2d6+4 plus curse of blacktooth lycanthropy)

Space 10 ft. **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Atks rage

Possessions A blacktooth ranger cannot use or carry any of his possessions while in dire wolverine form.

Rage (Ex): If a blacktooth ranger takes damage while in dire wolverine form he flies into a berserk rage on his next turn, clawing and biting madly until either he or his opponent is dead. A blacktooth ranger cannot end his rage voluntarily. While a blacktooth ranger is raging, his statistics change further as follows:

AC 29, touch 11, flat-footed 25

hp 199; fast healing 5; **DR** 10/silver and magic

Fort +20 (+22 vs poison)

Melee 2 claws +23 (1d8+11) and bite +18 (2d6+5 plus curse of blacktooth lycanthropy)

Grp +28

Abilities Str 32, Dex 16, Con 28

Skills Climb +22

Wolverine animal companions (2); hp 28; *Monster Manual* 283.

Tactics: Duallen begins combat in dwarf form, while his two bodyguards always stay in hybrid form. If Duallen runs out of spells or is dropped to fewer than 30 hit points, he transforms into a dire wolverine and attacks.

Duallen cast *stoneskin*, *false life*, *resist energy* (cold), *see invisibility*, and *mage armor* upon himself, as well as *mage armor* on each of his companions, before beginning his assault on the city. Meanwhile, his companions have cast *barkskin*, *resist energy* (cold), and *longstrider* on themselves. These effects remain if they shift into other forms. On the first round of combat, he casts quickened *mirror image* followed by *globe of invulnerability* on himself. During the second round, he casts *forcecage* on the group's healer, followed by a quickened *ray of enfeeblement* on their strongest fighter. He is counting on the *mythal's* ban on teleportation magic to keep the healer in the *forcecage* for the duration of the fight. His guards do their best to keep opponents off him, while he pummels the opposition with offensive spells.

Development: If the characters defeat the dwarven werewolverines quickly, a pair of Spellguard mages shows up and takes the bodies to the High Palace to be examined. If the characters protest or demonstrate any knowledge of the blacktooth fungus, the Spellguard assures them that they will be privy to any findings and offers to escort them to see the High Mage immediately.

DIVINATION MAGIC

It is likely that at some point the characters use divination spells to try to gain information about their target. The following guidelines and suggestions should help you adjudicate such endeavors.

Speak with dead: The most likely candidate for this spell is Duallen and his bodyguards, but since they were sent out with messages during the first part of the attack, they don't really have much information. All they know is that Deg Shanat came under attack from below, and that they were caught and injured by werewolverines just before they could leave for Silverymoon to warn the city.

Scrying, Prying Eyes, etc.: These spells can help the PCs plan their foray into Deg Shanat, but any attempt to *scry* or peer into the Twisted Run simply falls dark. Spells such as *prying eyes* remain active, but do not reveal anything until they are pulled back out of the shrine.

In the event that one or more of the characters falls victim to the blacktooth curse themselves, the Spellguard helps to subdue them so they can be restrained until a cure is found. The PCs' audience with the High Mage is postponed, and later that evening the afflicted characters are taken to the Temple of the Silver Stars, where High Moonmistress Shalyssa Lurialar oversees Selûne's direct intervention in curing the afflicted characters. When the cured PCs awake in the morning, Taern summons them to the High Palace without delay.

Audience with the High Mage

The High Palace of Silverymoon is one of the most awe-inspiring sights in Faerûn. Even if the characters still sting from the fight with Duallen, they should have a hard time ignoring its beauty and architectural genius. The grounds are uniformly green and feature a variety of trees and foliage from across the North, all artfully trimmed and placed to provide a peerless aesthetic experience. The palace wall is encased in the pure white marble that comprises the entire structure, and the merlons of its battlements are all carved to represent unicorn heads, ever vigilant over the city below. Of the High Palace's four towers, the largest and most ornate is the Moonshield, the central tower that houses the city's administrative halls.

The characters enter the High Palace through the Unicorn Gate in the western wall, having been directed there by their letter of invitation or by the Spellguard they met earlier in the day. The silver-clad High Guard escorts them through the gate and up the massive Silver Stair that leads to the Hall of Greeting. Once there, the palace steward greets them and shows them into the Great Hall.

The two enormous, silver-lined doors open into a cavernous chamber that feels bigger than the structure in which it rests. Towering, sculpted columns rise from a floor made of tightly fitted marble slabs. Designs wrought in platinum and gold mark different areas of the floor and lead you toward two large thrones near the back of the room. One throne is empty, the recessed vantage point of Lady Alustriel, former High Mage of Silverymoon and now leader of the Silver Marches. The other seat, the legendary Moonthrone, holds the current High Mage of Silverymoon, Taern Hornblade.

The wizened leader sits on the Moonthrone apparently lost in thought, but after several seconds he looks up and the grim look on his face softens slightly.

"I have called you here to share the wisdom of Selûne. Our Lady of Silver has shown me a terrible future, one in which the blight of the People of the Black Blood covers this city and all the lands of the North. As we speak, the Beastlord gathers his forces and plans an all-out assault on the Silver Marches. A shrine to Malar called the Twisted Run stretches for miles underneath the surface of Faerûn, and it is there that a powerful Chosen named anth-Malar marshals the Beastlord's army. I have seen a limitless horde of lycanthropes pouring forth and overrunning Silverymoon's defenders, and I am determined that this future shall not come to pass."

Taern focuses intently on the air behind and above the characters, makes an arcane gesture, and speaks a whispered word of power. The bodies of three dwarves appear in the air, floating in a stasis field.

"These were the lycanthropes you fought earlier. The Spellguard tells me that in their hybrid forms they were much larger than normal werewolverines, and I think I may have discovered why—blacktooth paste."

If the characters played through "Forest of Blood," then they know what the blacktooth paste is. Otherwise a character can make a DC 30 bardic knowledge or Knowledge (history) check, or DC 25 Knowledge (local: Silver Marches) check to have heard or read about Kazok's experiments in the North. If the party does not have this knowledge, Taern continues with the following description.

"If you look closely inside the mouths of these dwarves, you will see that their teeth are black and the flesh of their gums is scaly and gray. Not long ago, a druid from the frontier town of Berlingford nearly succumbed to a strange paste made from a cave fungus. His captor called the stuff 'blacktooth paste,' and its effects left its victim feral, weak-willed, and physiologically altered. I had thought it an isolated incident, but clearly it was not. I believe anth-Malar is using this paste to create a superior race of lycanthropes with which to overrun the Silver Marches, and I would like you to help us stop him."

At this point Taern gives the PCs time to talk amongst themselves, ask him questions, or examine the bodies of the dwarves. He answers their questions in detail and with the respect and candor afforded characters as powerful as the PCs. Once the questioning and discussion are complete, he summons the steward and remands to his chambers.

The Silver Marches have many great heroes—why did you call us? "You are not the only group investigating these visions, but the 'many great heroes' can't be everywhere at once."

Where is the Twisted Run? "Just to the north and east, running underneath the

Moonlands. We have never been able to penetrate its chambers, however. Magical transport and scrying seems to be blocked, and no physical entrances have ever been found. Until now we had not considered it a great threat, but it might hold the doom of the Silver Marches in its tunnels."

Who are these dwarves? "They have brands on their tongues identifying them as defenders from the dwarven outpost of Deg Shanat. It lies north of Khelb and the Silverymoon Pass. If the outpost has fallen, I fear the plague of werebeasts may be close at hand."

What other aid can you give us? "The city offers a 10,000 gp reward per member of your party. And, you shall have all the supplies you need; talk to the steward and he will see to it within the hour."

The steward provides the party with any mundane supplies and equipment they request, and can supply the characters with up to 1,000 gp worth of potions and scrolls for each party member. He also gives them a map that shows the route to Deg Shanat and the lands surrounding it. Once their preparations are made, the steward bids them farewell.

CHAPTER TWO: DEG SHANAT

This dwarven waystop was founded in 1287 DR when a group of explorers from Waterdeep came upon what they thought was a ruined outpost from the lost civilization of Shanatar. The group, including a dwarven loremaster named Tarnik Beatsturm, found a well-hidden entrance that led to a series of caverns whose architecture resembled the craftsmanship of the ancient kingdom. After digging deeper into the complex, they discovered another unusual feature—a swirling ring of magma that seemed to have a life of its own. The ring surrounded an island of stone, upon which nothing was found.

The group immediately laid claim to the place and began to explore it as an archeological site, but they were unable to find anything worthwhile. Their investigation of the traces of arcane and planar magic they found led nowhere. Eventually the group's sponsor sold the find to a clan of displaced dwarves who had been driven from their home by a drow invasion. The dwarves kept the name Deg Shanat out of convenience, as well as in tribute to the displaced civilization to which they felt connected through their own plight.

In fact, the caverns were never a Shanatar outpost, but a proving ground for an azer mercenary company who was determined to carve out a small empire on Faerûn. After repeated failures, the azers buried the entrance to their underground lair and returned to the Elemental Plane of Fire. One of these azers, a powerful sorcerer named Fittzz, has returned and agreed to help anth-Malar in exchange for a piece of the Silver Marches to call his own.

A rough road leads north off the Silverymoon Pass about 30 miles northeast of Silverymoon. It ends at Deg Shanat, and is the route Taern suggests. With a successful DC 25 Gather Information check, the crossroads can be described well enough to allow a character to teleport there with *greater teleport*. Or a local wizard who has been through the pass could be hired for 1d4+4×100gp. Otherwise the characters will have to reach Deg Shanat by more conventional means.

Approaching Deg Shanat (EL 17)

Read or paraphrase the following text when the characters approach the outpost.

A tall stone wall rises from the earth here. Thick tarps spread gently down from a central post, forming a barrier between the sky and the outpost beneath. Several chimneys rise from the structure. A pair of south-facing iron doors stands closed, and no activity can be seen in the building or on the muddy path that leads to the western wall.

When the dwarves took over the outpost, they built a large shelter over the original entrance to the caverns. It consists of a 20-foot-tall circular stone wall that covers an area over 100 feet in diameter, with several chimneys erupting out of a sturdy white shell made of bone and tarp. The tarp allows fresh water to be easily gathered from the frequent storms and snows of the region, while the reinforced bone plates can be used to make a defensible "shell" when the place is attacked. The ring of stones has two entrances: one pair of reinforced iron double doors in the south wall is the traveler's entrance, while a large sliding door on the western side of the ring can accommodate wagons and large animals.

Creatures: Anth-Malar has placed two of his blacktooth lycanthrope ranger guardians on a hill overlooking Deg Shanat. They are obscured by a growth of pine trees, but have a good view of all approaches to the structure. If the PCs do not take precautions to avoid being seen approaching the waystop, the guards attempt to ambush them a few hundred feet from the wall.

Blacktooth rangers (2): hp 179; see page 74.

Tactics: The rangers stay in hybrid form at all times now, enjoying the form's strength and savagery. Their post is on the hilltop looking south, and they cast their spells and prepare an ambush should they see anyone approach. If they lose sight of their prey, they search the area for an hour before going back up to their perch. These guards rotate twice a day with the guards in area **8** below.

Inside Deg Shanat

The exterior gates are both locked with finely crafted locks (Open Lock DC 35), but a Search check reveals a crack in the roof above the east wall. This hole was made by a band of dekanter goblin rogues who recently passed by and found the place "abandoned." The rogues are now inside, looting, pillaging, and enjoying the food and drink found in the remains of the inn. They are unaware of the dangers that lurk below or of the prowling beast of Malar that still stalks the ruin. They did encounter the priest, Tenris, but left him for dead after taking his valuables.

However the PCs enter the structure, read or paraphrase the following once they get inside.

The area behind the exterior walls of Deg Shanat is dark and silent. What little light exists filters in from the sky above, while the nearby lampposts stand dark. Two large, fenced yards can be seen through the hazy air, as can a low-lying central stone structure

that connects to a building on the outer wall. A two-story wooden building that looks like an inn hugs the wall near the southern gate. Nothing moves in the area, and the air, while noticeably warmer than outside, reeks with the stench of death and rot.

The surface level of Deg Shanat feels like an abandoned battlefield, although the only bodies evident are the carcasses of horses and rothés in the stableyard. Two-dozen torchlamps dot the area, which would be fairly bright if the lamps were all lit. Small tubes funnel in hot air from the forge below and keep the place warm.

An abandoned guardpost stands next to the doors on the southern wall, its occupants either killed or transformed and living below. It has since been converted into a fungus farm (see area 5). A cistern that collects rainwater from the tarps abuts the wall in a yard beyond the inn, and the smokehouse and storage unit next to it has been completely ransacked of all of its stored food. The cistern is still full of fresh water, however, and can be tapped. These two structures are completely fenced in, but the gate has been ripped off its hinges and the ground is torn up around it.

Anyone searching for tracks within the walls of Deg Shanat finds the place covered with traces of battle. Dwarf-sized boots dominate the tracks, but large and small mustelid tracks are also evident. A successful DC 20 Survival check made by someone with the Track feat finds huge feline tracks among the others, but they are fresher and seem to have been made well after the fighting ended. These are the tracks of anth-Malar's animal companion, who still lurks in the area (see area 4).

1. Wagon Yard

An intact five-foot-tall post and rail fence surrounds a large enclosure. Inside, lumber, wagon parts, and tools lie amidst piles of broken rock. A wagon loaded with boxes and sacks sits by the warehouse door.

This is the area where wagons would load and unload goods as they passed through Deg Shanat. Blood smears and claw marks can be found along its length with a DC 15 Search check, as some of Deg Shanat's defenders made their last stand here. Broken crossbows and piles of unfired crossbow bolts also tell the tale. None of the tools are of particularly good quality.

The sacks and crates in the wagon are filled with stone tiles, mortar, and some sculpted stone pieces that look like decorative wall hangings. The shipment was bound for a construction site in Sundabar, and papers underneath the wagon's seat (Search DC 20) can point the PCs in the right direction should they wish to see it delivered. If they do, the grateful contractor rewards them with 250 gp.

The door is a thin metal sheet that slides up and in toward the ceiling of the warehouse on tracks to either side. It is not locked.

2. Stable Yard

Before you lies the source of the stench that overpowers the air inside Deg Shanat. A dozen horse and rothé carcasses lay in vari-

ous states of violence and rot. Large chunks of flesh have been torn from the bones of the animals, and in some cases little more than a skeleton remains.

The lycanthropes ate the first of these animals, but once anth-Malar's beast showed up the stable yard became solely its domain. A single rothé still lives, but barely. If anyone approaches the animal, it tries to moan a warning that sounds more like a gasp for life. It has little chance to survive, but the PCs may wish to calm it and ease its passing.

Treasure: One of the slain horses wears a set of *horseshoes of a zephyr* that have not been claimed by the lycanthropes.

3. Warehouse (EL 17)

The interior of this building was once filled with orderly rows of boxes and sacks, stacked all the way to the ceiling. Now, the place lies in shambles, as hundreds of the crates have been torn open and their contents strewn across the floor.

This spacious building is used for temporary storage of goods and crafted items that flow out of and into Deg Shanat on a constant basis. Space is also rented out occasionally to travelers who want to lighten their loads before venturing into the Silverymoon Pass. Box after box of worked and unworked stone and metal goods line the walls of this structure. Trade goods and traveling gear can be found in piles, and locked chests and boxes hold various possessions left here by renters. Going through everything here would take at least a day, and the total value of the warehouse's contents is no greater than 5,000 gp if everything were to be taken and sold.

Creatures: The carnage in the yard outside hasn't deterred a band of dekanter goblin rogues who couldn't believe their luck when they found the place unguarded. They shook down the priest in area **6**, stealing his goods and wounding him even further, before coming here to loot. They have been here for a few hours already, smashing boxes and emptying bags. If the dekanter goblins hear the PCs outside, they immediately deploy as outlined under Tactics below. Otherwise, they are just as surprised as the PCs to find anyone here alive.

Dekanter Goblin (12) **CR 10**

Male and female dekanter goblin rogue 9
LE Medium monstrous humanoid (goblinoid)
Races of Faerûn 137
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Spot +13, Listen +13
Languages Common, Goblin, Undercommon

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20; Dodge, improved uncanny dodge
hp 68 (11 HD); fast healing 3
Resist cold 5
Fort +5 **Ref** +11 **Will** +7; evasion

Spd 20 ft.
Melee masterwork short sword +13/+8 (1d6+3/19–20 plus poison) and gore +6 (1d6+1)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +11
Atk Options Power Attack, sneak attack +5d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of invisibility,* thunderstone

Abilities Str 17, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 9
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +3
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (short sword)
Skills Climb +15, Diplomacy +1, Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Jump +15, Listen +13, Move Silently +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +13, Tumble +15
Possessions combat gear, masterwork short sword, *+1 studded leather armor, +1 buckler,* 3 doses of purple worm poison (Fort DC 24; 1d6 Strength/2d6 Strength)

Tactics: Make a Listen check for the goblins each time the PCs make loud noises outside the warehouse. If they detect the PCs, four goblins flank each of the entrances to the warehouse in preparation for an attack. They immediately charge the first creature through the door, hoping the viciousness of the attack will rid them of an opponent and drive away his allies. The remaining four goblins take positions behind several boxes in order to act as decoys to distract the PCs from their fellows. After this initial bum rush, the goblins attack viciously, but if the battle starts to go against them they have no compunction about drinking their *potions of invisibility* and attempting to flee the fort. The PCs might find themselves chasing the goblins down if they steal away with the *orb of Selûne.*

Treasure: In addition to his possessions, the leader of the goblins has the *orb of Selûne.*

THE ORB OF SELÛNE

This pearly white orb is a minor artifact about the size of a grapefruit, and provides several benefits to the person carrying it. First, the bearer gains a +4 bonus on saving throws to resist contracting lycanthropy. In addition, the bearer of the orb can cast *moonbeam* and *moon path* three times per day. Finally, if Selûne is the patron deity of the bearer of the *orb,* then even if the bearer contracts lycanthropy, he never transforms into beast form (voluntarily or otherwise). Should the orb leave his possession, however, the curse takes hold almost immediately and he transforms into a full-blooded lycanthrope.

Strong abjuration and evocation; CL 17th.

4. Inner Guardhouse (EL 13)

This 15-ft.-tall stone structure sits directly in the middle of Deg Shanat. The waystop's former inhabitants saw it as a symbol of strength, as if it held up the roof above their heads even though its roof is well below the tarp and bone ceiling of the fort. Anth-Malar's animal companion, a beast of Malar that has no name, generally sits atop this structure, watching over the interior of Deg Shanat for its master.

This room stands in disarray. Overturned desks and weapon racks cover papers and other debris on the floor. A taut, heavy chain runs from a bolt in the floor up to the ceiling and then back down through a twenty-foot by twenty-foot hole in the floor.

Several guards and administrators went about their daily business in this fortified wall in the center of Deg Shanat's surface level. The building was a second line of defense against attacks, and houses the only surface entrance to the living chambers and forge found below. The doors

leading out to the common area have been busted in, but the one leading to the warehouse is intact. A successful DC 10 Survival check made by someone with the Track feat reveals that multiple bodies have been dragged through this area toward the hole in the floor.

The chain is connected to a platform that can be raised and lowered using the winch on this level. It was used to transport large or heavy objects down to the living area or up from it, or to and from the forge by way of a second mechanism on the next level down. The winch can be operated by up to two people and requires a combined Strength of 25 to raise or lower up to 1,000 pounds; it can transport up to 2,000 pounds at a time, with each additional 100 pounds increasing the Strength requirement by one.

Creature: Anth-Malar's beast companion skulks atop the guardhouse, monitoring the interior of the dwarven waystop. It stays here as long as it can monitor the place unseen, evaluating but not attacking any intruders. If it is revealed, or if the PCs demonstrate unusual power, it retreats to the Twisted Run, alerting the denizens of the fortress to the PCs' presence on its way.

If the PCs attack the creature, remember that they get no XP for defeating it, since it is now the beast companion of anth-Malar.

Advanced beast of Malar: hp 136; see page 85.

5. Blacktooth Fungus Farm

A massive garden of fungus grows in this deserted guardhouse. The waterlogged white discs have blackened ends that make them look charred, but the dripping black slime belching out of their guts quells any notion of a fire having coursed through the building. The fungus field gives off a stench almost as bad as the carcasses of the dead animals in the stable yard across the compound. A cistern fed by runoff from the roof has been rigged up to spray a constant mist of water over the fungal growth.

A successful DC 15 Spot or Survival check recognizes that some patches of the fungus have been harvested. Gyneweir (see area **8** below) occasionally comes up for patches of the stuff as she creates new "cocoons" in which blacktooth lycanthropes can be created. Ingesting raw blacktooth fungus causes extreme nausea that lasts 48 hours or until the application of a *neutralize poison* spell, otherwise the stuff is harmless in its natural state.

6. Abandoned Inn (EL 8 or 15)

A hanging sign depicting a frothy, horned mug marks this as an inn. The front door of the place is busted in and nothing moves inside.

This is a fairly average inn with two stories. The lower floor contains a common room and storage while the upper floor is made up of eight guest rooms. The inn is completely trashed, and the remnants of food and ale can be found on the ground of all the bottom-floor rooms. Bloodstains, broken tables, and a barricade at the kitchen doorway tell of a battle in the room, but like the other areas there are no bodies or other remains.

Inside one of the eight guest rooms the PCs find a living survivor of a blacktooth werewolverine attack—a Selûnite priest named Tenner Dale. Tenner came here after receiving a vision from Selûne during prayer, but he misinterpreted her message and thought he was being chosen as a heroic liberator when she really wanted him to gather information and take it to the Temple of the Silver Stars. After arriving at Deg Shanat, he was quickly overwhelmed by a band of werewolverines who left him for dead when the beast of Malar showed up to defend its territory. Tenner crawled to the inn and holed up here to heal before escaping. Unfortunately for him, he was stricken with lycanthropy and cut off from his goddess's blessings. As long as he held the *orb of Selûne* he was immune to the transformation, but his wounds were great and he was unable to heal on his own. He thought about giving up the *orb* to gain the strength of his new form, but his devotion to Selûne overrode his desire to live. When the dekanter goblins snuck into Deg Shanat, they found him helpless and unable to defend himself. They took his valuables and left him to die, not knowing that by forcing his transformation, they were not only saving him, but also perhaps dooming themselves.

Creature: Tenner Dale, male human cleric 8 (Selûne), hp 56 (currently –2).

Development: Tenner is not far from his transformation now, and has a 10% chance per minute after the PCs find him to become a blacktooth werewolverine and start attacking. After giving them whatever information he can, he begs them to either find him the *orb* or kill him. If they heal him against his wishes, he races off after the dekanter goblins to retrieve the *orb* or die trying.

7. Elevator Room (EL 17)

Alcoves in several of the walls are filled with glowing rocks that light this room. The floor of the cavern slopes into two broad stairways on opposite sides of the room, each leading to a set of carved stone double doors.

Anth-Malar's night hag ally Gyneweir and her blacktooth lycanthropes have free run of this level, and they spend most of their time here. Gyneweir has taken over the chambers of the old leader of Deg Shanat, Adriken, who is now her blacktooth werewolverine lackey. He and the rest of the survivors of the initial assault roam the living quarters and occasionally go up or down to perform various tasks. The beast of Malar has recently made the upper level extremely dangerous, so the lycanthropes have mostly kept underground since its arrival.

The elevator shaft continues down to the Forge Cavern (area **10**).

Creatures: If the beast of Malar fled down to the Twisted Run (it generally just flies down the elevator shaft), it has alerted Gyneweir and the wereweasels to the PCs' presence. Adriken and the other lycanthropes are loyal to the night hag, and hope to overwhelm the PCs before they can mount a defense or bother Gyneweir in her chambers.

WEREWEASEL (30), HYBRID FORM CR 6

Male and female dwarf dire wereweasel expert 4

Monster Manual 65, 170

CE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Spot +9, Listen +10

Languages Common, Dwarven

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14

hp 34 (7 HD); **DR** 5/silver

Fort +5 (+7 vs. poison) **Ref** +8 **Will** +9 (+2 vs. spells)

Spd 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +9 (1d4+3) and bite +4 (1d6+1 plus curse of lycanthropy)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +8

Abilities Str 17, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ alternate form, dwarf traits, lycanthropic empathy

Feats Alertness, Endurance, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Craft [metalworking]), Stealthy, Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +8, Craft (metalworking) +12, Craft (stoneworking) +9, Gather Information +2, Hide +6, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +6, Profession (blacksmith) +8, Spot +9

Alternate Form (Su): In dwarf form, a wereweasel's statistics change as follows:

Init +0

AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12

Ref +4

Melee none

Grp +6

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11

Skills Hide +2, Move Silently +2

Alternate Form (Su): In dire weasel form the wereweasel's statistics change as follows:

Spd 40 ft.

Melee bite +9 (1d6+3 plus curse of lycanthropy)

Special Atks attach, blood drain

Adriken (Blacktooth ranger): hp 179; see page 74.

Tactics: The lycanthropes gather behind the door leading to the apartments (area 9) and wait for the PCs to appear. When they do, Adriken bursts through the door followed by a flood of other wereweasels. All of the wereweasels will fight to the death, often using the aid another action to ensure one or two gets attached to each PC each round. Adriken defends the door to Gyneweir's chambers to his last breath.

Wereweasel

Trap: Anyone entering the room from the stairwell that does not speak the password (Malar Shanat) triggers a *fire storm* that fills the elevator shaft from this level to the top, as well as the 10-foot square immediately in front of the door.

***Fire Storm* Trap:** CR 9; magic device; proximity trigger *(alarm)*; automatic reset; password bypass; spell effect (*fire storm*, 17th-level cleric, 17d6 fire, DC 22 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 33; Disable Device DC 33.

Development: If the wereweasels and the night hag haven't been alerted to the PCs' presence, they will be found in their respective areas, unaware of the intrusion on the level above. Gyneweir will knows that something is wrong as soon as either of the traps on her door is sprung, or if Adriken yells to alert her when the PCs attack.

8. Gyneweir's Chambers (EL 19)

What was once obviously a lavishly appointed living chamber now reeks of rotting vegetation, making the air heavy and acrid. A large, boiling cauldron bubbles and aspirates next to a pegboard full of hanging roots, sacks, and other items. The rear portion of the chamber is filled with blacktooth fungus and glistening mud.

The night hag Gyneweir was drawn to anth-Malar's evil power and philosophy several months ago and quickly became a loyal companion. She is the one who figured out how to create the blacktooth lycanthropes, continuing the work of the druid Kazok. She now prepares the paste in this makeshift lab and uses captured creatures to create ever more potent versions of "Malar's children." A captured creature must be wrapped in a cocoon made from the paste mixed with the blood of the chosen animal. The creature then lives for days on nothing but the liquid residue of the unprocessed fungus, which keeps the creature alive but in a delusional and catatonic state. After a week, the creature shifts into its new animal form and breaks free of the cocoon. The paste used to make a cocoon only serves to transform a single creature, thus necessitating the constant processing and growth of the raw blacktooth fungus.

Creatures: Gyneweir and her megaraptor animal companion can be found here, and will have prepared for the characters as outlined in Tactics below. She keeps two blacktooth ranger bodyguards here at all times.

GYNEWEIR CR 17

Female night hag druid 12

Monster Manual 193

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Spot +20, Listen +20

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal

AC 41, touch 14, flat-footed 39

hp 253 (20 HD); **DR** 10/cold iron and magic

Immune cold, fire, poison, charm, *sleep*, fear

SR 25

Fort +23 **Ref** +13 **Will** +21

Spd 30 ft.

Melee bite +25 (2d6+11 plus disease and poison [DC 28; 1d6 Con/1d6 Con])

Base Atk +16; **Grp** +21

Atk Options Serpent's Venom

Special Atks dream haunting, wild shape 4/day (Large, Tiny, Plant)

Druid Spells Prepared (CL 16th, +18 ranged touch)

6th—*fire seeds* (DC 24), empowered *flame strike* (DC 22) (2)

5th—*animal growth, baleful polymorph* (DC 21), *call lightning storm* (DC 23), *wall of thorns*

4th—*cure serious wounds, dispel magic, flame strike* (DC 22), *freedom of movement**

3rd—*cure moderate wounds* (2), *daylight, greater magic fang**, *spike growth*

2nd—*barkskin**, *bear's endurance**, *fog cloud, flaming sphere* (DC 20), *gust of wind* (DC 20), *resist energy*

1st—*entangle* (DC 17), *produce flame* (2), *faerie fire* (2), *longstrider**, *speak with animals*

0—*detect magic* (2), *light* (2), *read magic* (2)

* already cast

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th, +18 ranged touch) At will—*detect chaos, detect evil, detect good, detect law, detect magic, etherealness* (CL 16th), *magic missile, polymorph* (self only), *ray of enfeeblement, sleep* (DC 11)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 15, Con 26, Int 10, Wis 22, Cha 10

SQ nature sense, resist nature's lure, trackless step, wild empathy +14, woodland stride

Feats Empower Spell, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Mounted Combat, Natural Spell, Practiced Spellcaster, Serpent's Venom, Spell Focus (evocation)

Skills Bluff +11, Concentration +31, Craft (alchemy) +15, Handle Animal +10, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +20, Ride +15, Sense Motive +17, Spellcraft +11, Spot +20

Possessions *+3 hide armor, +4 heavy wooden shield, ring of protection +2, heartstone,* 188 pp

RIPPER **CR 10**

Female megaraptor animal companion

Monster Manual 60

N Large animal

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Spot +13, Listen +13

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17

hp 101 (10 HD)

Fort +12 **Ref** +10 **Will** +5; evasion

Spd 60 ft.

Melee talons +12 (2d6+6) and 2 foreclaws +10 (1d4+3) and bite +10 (1d8+3)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +17

Special Atk pounce

Abilities Str 22, Dex 16, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 15, Cha 10

SQ link, share spells

Feats Multiattack, Run, Toughness, Track

Skills Hide +10, Jump +28, Listen +13, Spot +13, Survival +12

Cauchemar nightmare: hp 172; *Monster Manual* 194.

Blacktooth ranger (2): hp 179; see page 74.

Tactics: Gyneweir listens to the battle in area 7 even if the beast doesn't warn her, so she knows when the PCs are coming for her. She casts the following spells in preparation for combat, in this order:

freedom of movement, barkskin, greater magic fang, and *bear's endurance.* In addition, she casts *longstrider* on herself each morning. The effects of these spells are reflected in the stat block above. Once she is prepared, she activates her Serpent's Venom feat, mounts her cauchemar nightmare ally, and travels out to the cavern etherally along with her animal companion and bodygards. Gyneweir and her allies appear behind the party. She casts spells while her mount breathes smoke and kicks at the PCs.

Traps: The dwarves placed a swinging blade trap on this door to protect their leader, and the trap still functions. Unless a stone button in the floor at the top of the stairs is depressed before a character walks up to the door, three spinning blades pop out from the walls, slice and dice anyone on the landing, and then retract again.

Gyneweir has installed a second trap as well on the stone plug that used to open the door (it has since been disabled). Now, if aligned in the correct manner and pressed inward, the plug triggers a series of three *greater dispel magic* spells centered at the bottom of the stairs.

Spinning Poisoned Blades Trap: CR 10; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +22 melee (4d6+12 plus poison, 3 scythes); poison (deathblade, DC 20 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 22.

***Greater Dispel Magic* Trap:** CR 9; magic device; touch trigger; manual reset; spell effect (three *greater dispel magic,* 18th-level sorcerer, +18 on three dispel checks against all in a 30-foot radius); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Treasure: Gyneweir hasn't bothered searching the room thoroughly, so a chest containing Adriken's wealth still rests in a hidden niche (Search DC 28). It contains 268 pp, 1,300 gp, 15 star sapphires (60 gp each), and a tiny dwarf sculpted of marble (300 gp).

Development: Gyneweir has no great desire to die for anth-Malar, so she only fights until it becomes clear she cannot defeat the PCs. At that point she and her nightmare go ethereal and retreat down to the caverns below. If the characters decide to rest before pressing on, she chooses the one who hurt her most and haunts his dreams. Otherwise, she pops up in their battles against Fittzz and anth-Malar, supplementing their already formidable powers with spells. If things ever look fatal, she goes ethereal and flees, leaving her work behind her.

9. Living Quarters (EL 10)

The bulk of Deg Shanat's denizens lived in these utilitarian quarters, one or two to a room. Some of the lycanthropes continue to live in the same rooms, but for the most part the entire area has been ransacked and is now used as a common living area. Adriken keeps the group's collective treasure (minus what Gyneweir and anth-Malar demanded for themselves) in one of the old storage rooms, but otherwise there is nothing of value to be found in any of the quarters. The storage rooms not used to keep the treasure are used by Gyneweir as blacktooth fungus farms, letting her continue to process the paste without traveling to the surface level.

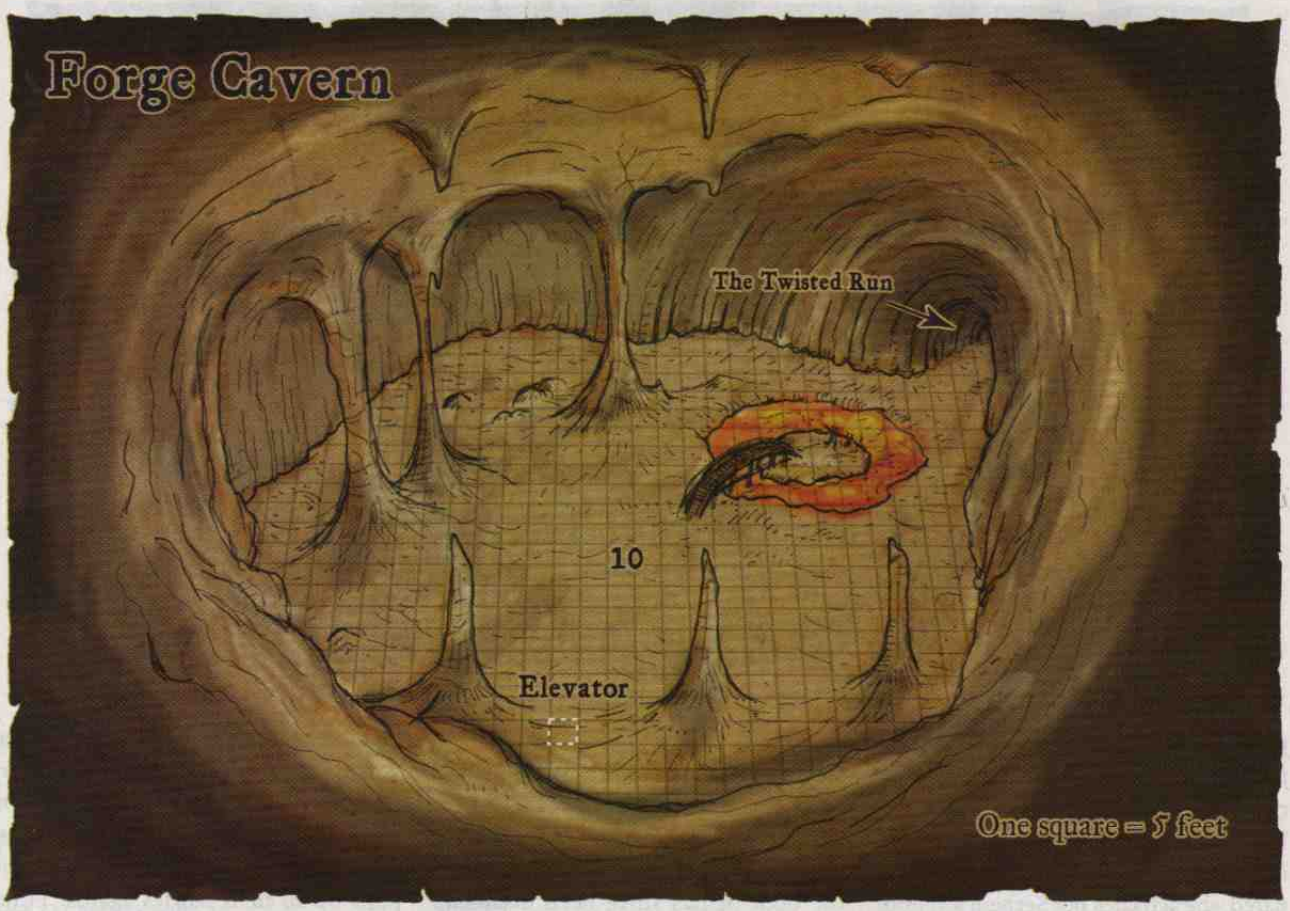
It is possible for the PCs to encounter Adriken and the wereweasels in here (see area 7). If this happens, they meet Adriken and four of the wereweasels first

GYNEWEIR'S FEATS

Gyneweir possesses two feats that appear in *Complete Divine.* They are:

Practiced Spellcaster: Gynewier's caster level for her druid spells is increased by 4.

Serpent's Venom: Gynewier can spend a usage of wild shape to give her bite attack a toxic venom. This poison has a save DC of 28, and initial and secondary damage of 1d4 Constitution. The save DC is Constitution based.



in the entry hall, with half the remaining weasels joining one round later, and the rest after another round.

Trap: The room in which all of the dwarves' old treasure is now stored has a fiendish trap set on the door. Anyone attempting to open the door sets off a *wail of the banshee* trap. It is possible that if the party fights Adriken in here that he will intentionally set off this trap in order to protect Gyneweir and her work, even if it means sacrificing himself.

***Wail of the Banshee* Trap:** CR 10; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*wail of the banshee*, 17th-level wizard, DC 23 Fortitude save negates); multiple targets (up to 17 creatures); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

Treasure: 243 pp, 8,560 gp, 11,380 sp, 12 diamonds (100 gp each), 20 emeralds (75 gp each), six statuettes (250 gp each), wand of *neutralize poison* (22 charges), three *potions of cure moderate wounds*, three *potions of bull's strength*, and two *potions of slow poison*.

10. Forge Cavern (EL 17)

Intense heat radiates from the floor of this cavern as soon as you enter it. Towering columns of stone rise from the floor to the ceiling, nearly 100 feet above. A glowing ring of lava surrounds a stone island on the far side of the cavern, and beyond that the cavern wall looks to have been shattered inward, as piles of rocky debris fan out from the dark hole beyond. A bridge grants access to the island, where several metal contraptions stand unused.

This large cavern is the reason that Deg Shanat was settled in the first place. A river of lava rings an island of stone, providing heat to the caverns above as well as a constant source of energy for the forges constructed by the original settlers. The lava is the result of a permanent minor planar breach that connects to the Elemental Plane of Fire. The breach was created long ago by a group of azers who went back to their native plane after an unsuccessful attempt to build an empire on the Material Plane.

Now one of the azers, a sorcerer named Fittzz, has returned and is guarding the entrance to the Twisted Run in exchange for a piece of the Silver Marches to call his own. He uses every power at his disposal to defeat enemies of anth-Malar, including one that has not been triggered since his original party came to the Material Plane decades ago (see Trap below).

Fittzz **CR 17**

Male azer sorcerer 17
Monster Manual 21
LN Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; Spot +15, Listen +15
Languages Common, Dwarven, Ignan

AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 23
hp 115 (19 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine
Immune fire
Resists cold 20; **SR** 13
Fort +13 **Ref** +13 **Will** +15
Vulnerable cold

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 *shock warhammer* +14/+9 (1d8+2 plus 1d6 electricity and 1 fire)
Ranged +1 *shortspear* +16 (1d6+2 plus 1 fire)
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +11
Atk Options Power Attack, heat
Combat Gear *wand of alarm* (11 charges), *potion of cure serious wounds*, scroll of *protection from energy*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 17th, +21 to overcome SR, +13 ranged touch)
8th (4/day)—*Bigby's clenched fist* (DC 24), *power word stun*
7th (6/day)—*limited wish* (DC 22), *prismatic spray* (DC 23), *spell turning*
6th (6/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 22), *globe of invulnerability, greater dispel magic*
5th (7/day)—*dismissal, dominate person* (DC 20), *telekinesis* (DC 20), *teleport*
4th (7/day)—*dimensional anchor, fire shield, greater invisibility, stoneskin**
3rd (7/day)—*fireball* (DC 19), *fly**, *haste, heroism**
2nd (7/day)—*invisibility**, *Melf's acid arrow, mirror image, see invisibility**, *scorching ray*
1st (8/day)—*expeditious retreat, mage armor**, *magic missile, shield, true strike*
0 (6/day)—*acid splash, arcane mark, detect magic, flare* (DC 16), *mending, message, ray of frost, read magic, resistance*
* already cast

Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 20
SQ summon familiar (toad)
Feats Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Penetration, Power Attack, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration
Skills Appraise +11, Climb +10, Concentration +22, Craft (stonemasonry) +12, Craft (weaponsmithing) +12, Hide +13, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Listen +15, Search +14, Spellcraft +20, Spot +15
Possessions combat gear, *+1 shock warhammer, +1 shortspear, amulet of natural armor +1, ring of protection +2, cloak of charisma +4, ring of major cold resistance*, 2 rubies worth 500 gp each, 750 gp worth of diamond dust, Fittzz has 1500 experience points available for the casting of *limited wish* spells

Tactics: If Fittzz has been alerted to the PCs' presence, he places an *alarm* on the entrances to this cavern. When the *alarm* goes off or he otherwise detects the PCs, he casts *stoneskin, fly, heroism, invisibility,* and *see invisibility* on himself and hides in the ring of lava, so that even if the characters can see invisible creatures they will still have to spot him (Spot DC 29). He also casts *mage armor* on himself each morning. He waits for the characters to explore the island before channeling a 6th-level spell slot into the planar breach, activating the Trap. Once the breach is open, Fittzz casts *greater invisibility* and uses *Bigby's clenched fist* and *telekinesis* to try to push characters into the lava, while defending himself with his lightning spells, *power word stun,* and *spell turning.* If hard pressed, he turns to *prismatic spray* to finish off tough opponents. If things go horribly against him, he flies straight into the planar breach, escaping to his home plane to lick his wounds and vow revenge.

Trap: Once per day, Fittzz can cause a complete planar breach between the Material Plane and the Elemental Plane of Fire to appear at the center of the island. In order to do this, he must take a standard action and channel at least a 6th-level spell into the river of lava. When he does this, a 10-foot-wide hole is ripped in space, and everything within a 100-foot radius gains the fire-dominant elemental trait. All creatures and objects in the area suffer 3d10 points of fire damage each round, and all unprotected flammable materials automatically catch fire. Creatures with the fire subtype (like Fittzz) gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks while within the breach, and all fire spells gain a +1 bonus to their save DC, if applicable. The planar breach lasts for 10 minutes, and Fittzz uses all of his powers to keep the PCs within its confines for as long as possible.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Grant the PCs 120% of the normal XP for defeating Fittzz if he successfully opens the planar breach.

11. The Twisted Run (EL 20)

The Twisted Run is a secret shrine dedicated to Malar in which his followers play out a deadly hunt several times per year. Anth-Malar himself leads the ritual hunts, and his beast companion is the horror that tracks down released prey. These rituals are never celebrated publicly, and the fate of the dozens who have died in the dark tunnels is never revealed except to the cultists who capture them. Few, if any, ever dare to tread the tunnels of the Twisted Run, and even anth-Malar feels a twinge of fear when he explores too deep. The tunnels are always slick with wetness and the walls seem to close in around all who enter. The following effects are constant within the confines of the shrine, although any creature that succeeds at a saving throw related to the shrine does not need to make another one until it leaves and reenters the place.

- Divination spells do not function within the shrine, nor can such a spell reveal anything about the shrine. For instance, a mage that casts *prying eyes* could send his eyes into the shrine, but he would not be able to see through them as long as they remained inside it.
- Upon entering the Twisted Run, characters must succeed on a DC 15 Will save or be shaken for as long as they remain inside and for an hour after leaving. The walls seem to close in around all those within the shrine, and the haunting howls of some vicious creature never seem too far away. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.
- All divine spells except those cast by a cleric or druid of Malar are cast at –1 caster level. This does not affect which spells a character has access to, just the effectiveness of those he casts.
- Conjuration (summoning) spells do not work within the confines of the shrine, and summoned creatures cannot enter it.

The characters' trip through the Twisted Run should be short but terrifying. Anth-Malar will not allow them to infiltrate too far into his god's shrine, and will rush to meet them as soon as they enter. After several twists and turns through the tunnels, he meets them in a jagged cavern whose stalactites hang low to the ground.

The tunnel widens into a flat cavern with at least three other exits. The floor rises and dips in places, making it difficult to

see the exact layout of the room. Stalactites hang low throughout the room, sometimes no more than six feet off the ground. The rhythmic drip of condensation is punctuated only by the growls of some fearsome beast from deeper within the tunnels.

Creatures: Anth-Malar prowls this cavern, hidden behind one of the folds in the floor. He leaps to attack as soon as any character moves into range for him to charge, or if someone spots him. It is here that he will stop this incursion into the Beastlord's holy shrine. His beast companion lurks in the stalactites on the ceiling, dropping on one of the PCs as soon as anth-Malar strikes. It begins combat in claw slayer form, and can take a full attack action on the turn it drops down.

anth-Malar: hp 252; see Appendix.

BEAST OF MALAR (CLAW SLAYER FORM) CR 13
Monsters of Faerûn 20
CE Medium magical beast (shapechanger)
Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Spot +15, Listen +15
AC 28, touch 13, flat-footed 25
hp 136 (13 HD) regeneration 6; **DR** 5/magic; **Immune** fear
Fort +13 **Ref** +11 **Will** +6 (+10 vs. enchantment); evasion
Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee bite +25 (2d6+11/19–20) and 4 claws +22 (1d6+5/19–20)
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +24
Atk Options Power Attack
Special Atk Improved grab (bite)
Abilities Str 32, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 17
SQ link, share spells
Feats Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Track, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bite)
Skills Climb +22, Hide +6, Jump +14, Listen +15, Move Silently +6, Spot +15, Survival +5, Swim +13
Regeneration (Ex): Divine magic and good-aligned weapons deal lethal damage to a beast of Malar.
Shapeshifting (Su): As a full-round action, a beast of Malar can shift between any of its three forms (claw slayer, hunting panther, and bat). Each time the beast of Malar uses this ability it regains 13 hit points. Note that his ability allows it to heal lethal damage it could not normally regenerate. In hunting panther form, the beast of Malar's statistics change as follows:
Init +11
AC 26, touch 17, flat-footed 19
Ref +15
Spd 60 ft.
Melee 2 claws +20 (1d4+3/19–20) and bite +18 (1d6+1/19–20)
Grp +16
Special Atks improved grab (claws and bite), pounce, rake 1d4+1
Abilities Str 17, Dex 24
Skills : Balance +19, Climb +5, Hide +18 (+22 in heavy undergrowth), Move Silently +18, Swim +5
Shapeshifting (Su): In bat form, the beast of Malar's statistics change as follows:
Init +10
AC 22, touch 13, flat-footed 19
Ref +14
Spd 10 ft., fly 30 ft. (clumsy)
Melee bite +20 (1d6+6/19–20)
Grp +17
Special Atks none
Abilities Str 19, Dex 22
Skills : Climb +6, Jump +6, Swim +6

Tactics: Anth-Malar and his companion attack without mercy, while the cries of combat and smell of blood attract werewolverines and wereweasels from around the shrine. There is a 25% chance each round of combat that either 1d2+1 blacktooth rangers or 2d4+2 wereweasels (50% chance of either) appear out of the tunnels and join the fray. This continues until there are 10 lycanthropes in the chamber, anth-Malar is defeated, or the PCs retreat or die.

One of anth-Malar's favorite combat techniques in this chamber is to grapple an opponent and then thrust the opponent upward, impaling him on one of the low-hanging stalactites. He does this by making a successful grapple check against a creature he is already grappling. The maneuver causes 2d10+9 points of damage, and the character must make a DC 15 Reflex save or be impaled on the stone. Impaled creatures automatically suffer 2d10+9 points of damage each round, and must make a DC 20 Strength or Escape Artist check as a full-round action in order to pull free. An impaled spellcaster must succeed on a Concentration check (DC 10 + damage suffered) in order to cast a spell. The Chosen relies on his *ioun stones* to protect him from spells, so he doesn't particularly go after spellcasters over other targets.

Development: Once anth-Malar is defeated, the oppression of the Twisted Run lifts momentarily, then seems to come back with renewed fury. All characters must make an immediate DC 20 Will save or be shaken until they leave the shrine. Some characters might want to further explore the shrine and destroy

Anth-Malar

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"The Twisted Run" is designed for a party of four 17th-level PCs. Here are a few ways to modify the adventure for different levels of play:

15th–16th-level PCs: Characters of this level can handle most of the encounters in this adventure with good tactics and judicious spellcasting. Consider lowering all named NPCs by one level, and reduce the number of wereweasels in area 9 to 20. Also, slow the rate of werewolverines in the final battle with anth-Malar by half, up to a maximum of 8.

18th–19th-level PCs: Bump any NPC or monster with class levels up by one level. Give Fittzz a pair of elder fire elemental allies, and consider having the party encounter a pair of purple worms in the Twisted Run before they encounter anth-Malar.

the evil within, in which case you can have them fight as many wereweasels and blacktooth rangers as you like. Most of the beasts will attempt to flee into the lands above, perhaps leaving behind clues for further adventures.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If anth-Malar is destroyed, the characters can report back to Taern about what they have found. The plague of lycanthropes has at least been staved off by the defeat of their leader and the cessation of the blacktooth lycanthrope creation. Of course, even a single blacktooth beast could cause an epidemic wherever it goes. The characters will be celebrated with a feast at the High Palace and given their promised rewards. Some of Silverymoon's most prominent allies will be present at the feast, possibly including Lady Alustriel and her sisters, which raises the reputation and esteem of the PCs as well as gives them a chance to court powerful allies and friends. The city of Silverymoon will not take part in the festivities, though, as it has seen worse than this before; the Silveraen prefer not to be bothered with the grandstanding of heroes, even if they saved the city itself.

Should the characters fail to destroy anth-Malar, he quickly brings his plan to fruition, unleashing a horde of blacktooth lycanthropes against the Silver Marches. He likely attacks a smaller city, such as Khelb, before attacking Silverymoon, Sundabar, and Everlund. The consequences of this assault could make good fodder for a follow-up campaign.

If Gyneweir escaped with the secret of the blacktooth fungus intact, it is likely that Taern will task the PCs with finding her and ending the blacktooth threat forever. This can be used to launch further adventures, as well as give the characters a chance to gallivant across the planes (since Gyneweir will probably cool her heels in Hades for a bit after her defeat).

APPENDIX: CHOSEN OF MALAR

Like the goddess of magic, Mystra, Malar sometimes endows his most powerful followers with a bit of divine essence so that they may better serve him in the world. Unlike Mystra, however, Malar chooses only his most devout and powerful follower at any given time for this honor.

The current Chosen of Malar is anth-Malar, a barbaric cult leader in the Silver Marches who has assembled an army of lycanthropes in a bid to destabilize the region.

Sample Chosen of Malar

This example uses a human barbarian 15 as the base creature.

anth-Malar
Medium Humanoid
Hit Dice: 15d12+135 (252 hp)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 40 ft.
AC: 26 (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +7 *skin of Malar*, +2 *ring of protection*), touch 15, flat-footed 23
Base Attack/Grapple: +15/+21
Attack: Claw of Malar +26 melee (1d8+11/19–20 plus wounding)
Full Attack: 2 claws of Malar +26 melee (1d8+11/19–20 plus wounding)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Claws of Malar, greater rage 4/day
Special Qualities: Beast companion, damage reduction 5/—, fast healing 10, fast movement, illiteracy, improved uncanny dodge, immunities, indomitable will, lord of beasts, resistance to acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5, and sonic 5, trap sense +5
Saves: Fort +18, Ref +8, Will +9
Abilities: Str 23, Dex 17, Con 28, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 17
Skills: Climb +18, Handle Animal +9, Intimidate +18, Jump +18, Listen +14, Ride +10, Spot +7, Survival +14, Swim +15.
Feats: Dodge, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Leadership, Mobility, Power Attack.
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 19
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Chaotic evil
Advancement: By character class
Level Adjustment: +8

A monstrous bestial warrior leaps out of the darkness. His body is covered in wild fur, and blood drips from his cruel hooked claws.

Combat

Claws of Malar (Su): Anth-Malar has two claw attacks as a primary attack. These attacks deal damage as if he had the Improved Critical and Improved Natural Attack feats for each attack. They each have a +5 enhancement bonus on attack and damage rolls, and deal vicious wounds as if each had the *wounding* special quality. These claws are considered to be magic, chaotic-aligned, and evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Immunities (Ex): Anth-Malar is immune to aging effects and does not age. Bonuses still accrue, and anth-Malar still dies of old age when his time is up. Anth-Malar is also immune to disease, disintegration, and poison. He has no need to sleep (although he must rest normally in order to prepare spells).

Lord of Beasts (Ex): Anth-Malar gets a +10 bonus on all Charisma-related skill checks when dealing with lycanthropes.

Rage (Ex): When anth-Malar rages, his statistics change as follows: hp 297; AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21; Grp +24; Atk claw of Malar +29 melee (1d8+14/19–20 plus wounding); Full Atk 2 claws of Malar +29 melee

SKIN OF MALAR

This protective cloak is a minor artifact made from the hide of a beast of Malar, and still bears telltale bloodstains. A hood made from the top of the beast's head makes it look as if the wearer is emerging from its vicious maw. The cloak protects its wearer as *+5 leather armor of moderate fortification*, and grants the wearer resistance to acid, cold, electricity, fire, and sonic 5. In addition, it gives the wearer DR 2/—, which stacks with other sources of DR (such as the barbarian's class ability).

If Malar is not the patron deity of the wearer, then he suffers 4 negative levels for as long as the *skin of Malar* is worn.

Strong abjuration; CL 20th; Weight 10 lb.

(1d8+14/19–20 plus wounding); SV Fort +21, Will +12 (+16 versus enchantment); Str 29, Con 34; Climb +21, Jump +21, Swim +17.

Possessions: Skin of Malar, amulet of natural armor +4, ring of protection +2, pale lavender ellipsoid, clear spindle, and iridescent spindle ioun stones, minor cloak of displacement, boots of speed, gloves of Dexterity +2.

Creating a Chosen of Malar

"Chosen of Malar" is an acquired template that can be applied to any giant, humanoid, or monstrous humanoid (referred to hereafter as the base creature). A Chosen of Malar uses the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here. A Chosen of Malar only retains this power at the will of Malar; should the Beastlord decide to remove Chosen status from the base creature, it reverts to its original abilities. Normally there is only one Chosen of Malar at a time.

Size and Type: The creature's size and type remain unchanged.

Armor Class: Same as the base creature.

Attacks: The Chosen of Malar gains two claw attacks as a primary natural attack if it did not already have them. It retains the ability to use weapons.

Damage: The Chosen of Malar has claw attacks. If the base creature does not have a claw attack, use the damage value on the table below.

Size	Bite Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	3d6
Colossal	4d6

Special Attacks: The Chosen of Malar retains the base creature's special attacks, and gains the following special attack:

Claws of Malar (Su): The Chosen of Malar's claw attacks are enhanced by the power of Malar. They deal damage as if the base creature had the Improved Critical and Improved Natural Attack feats for each attack. Each claw has a +5 enhancement bonus on attack and damage rolls, and deals vicious wounds as if each had the *wounding* special quality. These claws are considered to be magic, chaotic-aligned, and evil-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Special Qualities: A Chosen of Malar retains all special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following:

Beast Companion (Ex): Malar sends a beast of Malar to his Chosen as a companion. The beast of Malar acts in all ways like a druid's animal companion, including gaining additional HD and abilities as if the Chosen was a druid 9 levels lower than his class level (minimum 1).

Fast Healing (Ex): The Chosen is expected to engage in vicious hand-to-hand combat with enemies of Malar. The Beastlord grants him the ability to heal damage suffered in such pursuits. The Chosen gains fast healing 10.

Lord of Beasts: The Chosen of Malar gets a +10 bonus on all Charisma-related skill checks when dealing with lycanthropes.

Immunities (Ex): The Chosen of Malar is immune to aging effects and does not age. Bonuses still accrue, and the Chosen still dies of old age when his time is up. The Chosen of Malar is also immune to disease, disintegration, and poison. He has no need to sleep (although he must rest normally in order to be able to prepare spells).

Abilities: The Chosen of Malar has a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength and a +10 enhancement bonus to Constitution.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +4.

Alignment: Usually chaotic evil (neutral evil druids are the only exception).

Level Adjustment: +8.

Wil Upchurch has been playing in the Forgotten Realms *for about 20 years now, but he's never had so much fun trying to destroy them.*

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WINGING IT

PART 2: PREPARING TO BE UNPREPARED

BY MONTE COOK
BY KYLE HUNTER

"Winging it," meaning running a game when you've got nothing prepared—whether because you weren't able to take the time or because the PCs decided to do something unexpected—is one of the most challenging aspects of being a good DM. Part of recognizing that no matter how hard you try, you will have to wing it now and again, is an important first step. The second step is to do some things to get ready for when it happens ahead of time. In other words, prepare to be unprepared.

Lists

I have, in the DMG, recommended keeping a list of NPC names handy when you play. This has been an invaluable resource for me, particularly since I run an urban campaign where the PCs meet many new NPCs each session. There was one night, well into the Ptolus campaign, when the PCs were chatting with a guard watching a gate and they asked him his name. I just shook my head and and "uh, I don't know. His name's not important." The players all stared. They exchanged looks. I asked what was wrong. They said that for months they'd felt like everyone in the city of Ptolus had a name. This was the first unnamed NPC they'd encountered. I realized right then and there that I'd made a casual, but terrible blunder. I'd done a lot of work establishing the verisimilitude of the game and blown it all away. Apparently, now not everyone in the city had a name.

The moral to this story is that if every NPC has a name that fits with the campaign (no city watchmen named Bob) and the players never see you struggling to make up a name on the fly, they'll forget that these are NPCs, and think of them as just characters who really live in the world. They're not going to know when an NPC is important, and statted up ahead of time, or just some guy you had to pull out of the air because the situation demanded it.

Of course, just as crucial is that when you use a name off your list, you put a mark by it (so there are not two Covell Brewmakers in town) and perhaps a note so that you can remember who that person is. Suddenly, it just went from a name on a list to an actual character the PCs have interacted with, and if they come back you want to make sure he still has the same name.

But there are other lists you can prepare. For example, you could make a list of NPC traits. The list might say: "Tall, grumpy, bearded, scar on cheek, loudmouthed, carries a broken sword, etc..." Some physical traits, some personality, some dealing with gear—it doesn't matter. You're just going to assign one or two to an on-the-fly NPC to give the PCs something to remember and to make it seem like he's not just "a guy" you had to make up quick. Likewise, you can create a list of things that NPCs do. The list could say "reading a book, eating an apple, playing a dice game, etc..." Now, when the PCs come to where an on-the-fly NPC is (friend or foe), the NPC isn't just standing there waiting for the PCs to find him.

Treasure (or at least interesting treasure) is another thing that is difficult to come up with on the fly. If every NPC has a *ring of protection* and a *potion of cure light wounds*, that's pretty repetitious and dull. A list of magic items appropriate in power and value for your PCs would be very handy—particularly if they're the items that don't always come to mind immediately, like *Daern's instant fortress* or a scroll of *phantom steed*. You can use this list to equip on-the-fly foes, or stock on-the-fly treasure stashes. You can even put non-magical treasure items on your list that you might not come up with in a pinch, such as a leather-bound book about the royal family with jewels set into the cover.

You could even create a list of interesting places: the inside of a clock tower, on top of a moving horse-drawn coach, beneath the old mill, under the duke's bed, within an active volcano, and so forth. Use this list to determine a place for an encounter to occur, for an important treasure to be stored, for a thief to hide, or for an evil wizard to make his lair.

Steal a Destination

Since you're reading DUNGEON, it's probably safe to say that you're not one of those DMs that avoids pre-published adventures like the plague, suggesting that only uncreative people use them (the self-righteousness of those DMs can be annoying). DMs should use every tool at their disposal to provide a good experience and a cool campaign for their players, and if plunking down an adventure from a product or a magazine works, by all means do it (it can also provide a sure way to make sure you don't fall into creative ruts—see sidebar). What's more, every DM with a collection of DUNGEON back issues or published adventure modules should become familiar with the concept of "looting," whether it be for preparing your own adventures, running adventures on the fly, or both. Looting is when you read through a published product and tear out bits (encounters, NPCs, new magic items, etc.) to use in your own campaign. There's no shame in this. It's not plagiarism. Remember: use every tool at your disposal. The best DMs I know are all notorious looters.

So to prepare ahead of time for when you need to wing it, take a stack of back issues of this very magazine and flip through the adventures—particularly the ones you're unlikely to run in their entirety. Use post-it notes to mark the pages that have an interesting encounter and write something on the post-it to help you remember ("cool cave encounter," or "interesting evil wizard," or whatever). Keep those issues handy. When you've got to wing a session, pull one out, and take one of the encounters. Think of that encounter as the destination and where the PCs are now as the starting point. It's easier to plot a path between two points than to have no destination at all. If it's a city encounter, you know you've got to get them into a nearby city if they're not there already. How to get them to a city? What if they need some special healing at a temple? Maybe you throw a monstrous scorpion at them with the hopes that one will get terribly poisoned and the group will want to go to town to get his ability score restored. Likewise, if it's a dungeon encounter, you've got to get them underground. Perhaps the inn in which they are staying has a secret underground level that even the proprietor doesn't know about. The important thing is that you've got the destination in mind, and that helps you come up with appropriate ideas.

For example, say the PCs are in the wilderness, exploring an uncharted area. You pull out DUNGEON issue #125, having picked the grimlock temple of Erythnul from "The Three Faces of Evil" as a cool encounter, appropriate to the PCs' level. That's your destination. Now you've just got to come up with a way to get the PCs there. As they wander, you tell them they see a cave in a nearby hillside. There are tracks all around it that seem to be made by humanoid creatures. If they ignore that hook, you can let them go on (scrambling in secret for another destination), or you can say they hear distant screams coming from the cave. Or perhaps a Knowledge (history) check suggests that there are stories of subterranean raiders coming up to attack the surface here over the last 20 years. Or whatever else you think will entice the players (you know them best). Once in the cave, you can come up with some winding tunnels, some grimlock guards, and so forth for the PCs to encounter before they get to the temple. Or just use the other grimlock caves from the issue.

Obviously, the grimlock temple isn't literally the PCs destination. They probably didn't know they were going there. These are short-term destinations. Once you finish that encounter, you pick another destination. But be careful not to lead your players by the nose when you do this. It seems strange, but when you're winging it, it's easy to fall into the trap of railroading the PCs along on one path. Since you barely have one path in mind, let alone a number of paths that the PCs might follow, you might tend to force them down the one you have just come up with on the fly, particularly if you're feeling the pressures of winging it get to you.

Maybe after the fight with the grimlocks, the PCs decide to rest. The next encounter you steal, one with a displacer beast, could come to them while they rest. Or maybe they head out of the wilderness altogether to get some healing. The trick to avoiding leading them by the nose is to let them lead you. If they go back to town, pick a destination appropriate for an urban environment, or something they encounter on the road. The PCs pick the path, and you determine what's at the end of that path.

Prepare Your Own Destinations

Instead of looting, you could prepare your own encounters to use when you don't have anything else prepared. This is a little different than using published material. You don't want to write out the encounter fully, but just enough to be something that will give you inspiration while you're winging it. For example, you could write down something as simple as this: "Fight in a church belfry with an assassin disguised as a cleric." Now you've got a destination, and an opponent. You could have the PCs chasing the assassin after he's murdered someone important and follow the trail into a church. Or you could have them come to the church and sense that something's just not right here. In any event, the assassin's got something in the belfry that encourages him to make his last stand there, or maybe that's just the only place for him to go when he's in trouble.

Grasp At Straws

The PCs have just defeated a major villain in his castle and you were sure that they would explore the castle and the dungeons underneath, a scenario that would surely keep them busy for a couple of sessions, at least. But they decide to go find the villain's cohort that fled out of the castle instead.

And you got nothing.

The cohort was supposed to be of no consequence. You don't know where he went. You have two choices. One, you can continue with your plan that the cohort is of no consequence. He's fled into the nearby woods, and the PCs track him down without too much problem. Hopefully, the adventure will get back on track quickly.

But maybe the cohort *should* be of consequence. Just because you hadn't given him any thought doesn't mean that you're betraying your own vision by making him important. (This is different than if you're running a murder mystery and you let the PCs decide who the murderer is, or change your own idea of who the murderer is based on what the PCs think and do—as I stated last issue, this is dangerous, because smart players will see through it easily. But there's nothing wrong with using player attention to spotlight and elaborate on something you formerly gave little thought to.)

If the cohort is important, he needs details.

But how do you come up with these details? Remember that anything can be used as a source of desperate inspiration. Flip through a rulebook and steal an idea from an illustration. Find a picture of a king? Perhaps the cohort was a spy for the throne, and he's gone back to report to his liege. A picture of a dragon? What if the cohort was actually a polymorphed dragon and he's returned now to his lair? A picture of a thief? What if the cohort was stealing from the villain and now he's sneaking away with his loot?

Or you look around the room. There's a magazine on the coffee table with a sailboat—the cohort hired passage on a ship. The newspaper next to the magazine has a headline about a bank holdup—the cohort is a part of the thieves' guild. I can't tell you what kind of spontaneous inspirational sources are around you, but I assure you there are some, and anything—anything—can lead to an idea for an adventure, an encounter, an NPC, or whatever you need.

Ultimately, the point is that you don't want to go into any DMing situation unarmed. You want as many tools at your disposal as possible to help you generate ideas. But you also need to train your mind to see the inspirational sources at hand. When you're winging it, you've got to create what you need quickly and without panicking. Like I said last time—never let them see you sweat.

Next Time: The math of winging it (or how to come up with stats on the fly).

Monte Cook is the author of the Dungeon Master's Guide. *Check out his publishing company, Malhavoc Press, at montecook.com.*

None of Us Are as Creative as We Think

Even as creative people, we get into ruts, and these ruts make themselves known when we wing it. Everyone's ruts are different, and it's difficult to see them. Every mayor of every town is fat and corrupt. Every weaponsmith is a gruff dwarf. Every wizard casts *magic missile*. Every villain has three guards. And so on.

The point is, we can't really see our own ruts. They could come at any time, in any form. But your players will notice them, eventually. The more you DM on the fly, the more they'll come up in the game, because the key to running games on the fly is using what comes to mind. But unfortunately, what comes to mind first are the things you don't always want to use, because they fall into your creative ruts.

The first solution is to try to identify at least some of your own creative ruts. Being aware of them means you can avoid them. The second, and even more important one is to expose yourself to new material. This might mean reading some adventures written by someone else. It might mean picking up a different kind of novel or watching a different kind of TV show, just to get your mind thinking in new ways. Looking for an idea for a swords and sorcery style adventure? Watch an old western. You'll be surprised how easy it is to steal the core plot. Never run an investigation-style adventure? Read some mystery novels. You'll likely be overwhelmed with ideas for presenting clues.

Once you've got some exposure to new things, use them to draw upon when you're DMing on the fly rather than the things you normally draw inspiration from. When you're scrambling for an encounter involving a villain and some orc guards, don't think about *The Lord of the Rings*—it's too obvious. Think about the news article you just read about striking workers, and base the encounter around the idea that the orc guards are turning against their master.

The important thing is to look beyond yourself, look beyond your usual sources, and look beyond the clichés to find inspiration for what you present to your players. Everyone's creativity needs a change of pace every once in a while.

FAMILIAR CREATURES WITH NEW FACES

BY CHRISTOPHER WISSEL
BY UDON WITH JIM ZUBKAVICH

In fantasy gaming, monsters are comprised of two basic elements: a conceptual idea of what the monster looks like, how it behaves, and where it lives; and a set of rules, numbers, and statistics that determine how it interacts with the rest of the world. While the latter usually flows from the former, this does not always have to be the case. If you need a fresh creature to populate a level of your dungeon, you can create a new monster by taking the stat block of an existing creature and reinventing its physiology. Without having to worry about the math surrounding stat block generation, you can create ecologies, backgrounds, and distinctive appearances for creatures that will keep even the most knowledgeable players on their toes. Below are a few examples of new creatures created with the stat blocks of familiar monsters.

CALENDRIAN MASS

This is a swarm of diminutive, bat-like shadow monsters that invade the night in search of living creatures to feed upon. They are entirely corporeal, but unable to hold their form independently. To exist comfortably, the creatures must bond together to make a stable mass. A network of interconnected energy allows

the whole swarm to feed, regardless of an individual's relative location. The final shape varies, but often resembles a Gargantuan black dragonfly with two long reptilian arms. When damaged, wisps of the creatures come off of the mass like blood, dissipating into the air. If it receives lethal damage, the entire mass dies at once, fading into the night.

Use stats for rocs.

DREAM SPIDERS

These small, spider-like creatures live in any underground environment, often near high-traffic areas. Their pale gray fur sticks up from their backs like bristling quills. Red eyes gleam with intelligence as they weave illusory magic from the Realm of Dreaming. These creatures delight in spinning sensory webs to trap the most wary of Underdark travelers.

Use stats for pixies. The spider's quills function as the pixie's arrows.

FEIRUNDIL

This creature lives in cold alpine wastes where it maintains a vast hunting ground. It has six massive ostrich legs arranged circularly around a central trunk, with a single beak on the underside of its body. It is too heavy to pounce, but it can rear on two legs while striking with its remaining limbs. Its powerful legs bear wicked claws that can easily tear apart a human-sized creature. If it hits with more than one leg, it can rend an opponent to shreds for a quick meal.

Use stats for girallons.

HUMMINGBIRD DEMON

This creature resembles an insect-like humanoid, with five very long tentacle pods on each hand, each capable of independent action. Its insect-like head ends in a long proboscis that probes the air in search of food. These cave-dwelling creatures get their name for their gossamer wings, which flap at high speeds and allow the creatures to hover in place. They feed on fluid sucked from the brains of sentient creatures.

Use stats for grells, but give them a –4 penalty on Move Silently checks due to the noise of the wings.

MEDUSA QUEEN

This creature is not a medusa, but rather a water-based offshoot of enormous size. The massive bloated frame resembles coils of snake bodies without beginning or end. Two massive, oily wings jut from either side of the vaguely female torso, and wave about lazily while the queen sleeps. The head consists of dozens of snakeheads that hang unmoving, as if dead. There are no visible eyes, but the massive forehead wrinkles with intelligence when the creature is awake. If provoked, they can move their massive frames in water, on land, and even through the air.

Use stats for an old green dragon. Replace any flying feats with Improved Natural Armor.

MIRROR FIEND

Created from the aberrations of the Far Realm to accurately reflect their mad geometry, these creatures are almost entirely two-dimensional. Their sheer surface absorbs light, making them hard to see. They are sinuous and malleable, the only constants being a single alien eye that glows with malevolence and a series of broken shards that can be opened like a mouth. To move, they must thicken their bodies into the third dimension, allowing them to take quick, rolling steps. They lash out with two razor-thin extensions of their body, while tearing with their jagged teeth.

Use stats for displacer beasts.

MOLT GOBLIN

This horrible beast is the result of a rare magical disorder. Most goblins never develop this terrible condition, but for the unlucky few it is a fate worse than death. A form of gigantism, it causes the muscles and bones of an afflicted goblin to grow continuously while leaving the skin unaffected. The goblin lives in a constant state of pain. Its skin hangs from its body in bloody tatters. Worse, this supernatural disease grants its victims almost complete immunity to magic, preventing others from giving them magical healing. Most afflicted goblins are slowly driven insane by the pain. Eventually they attack other creatures indiscriminately, often seeking their own death.

Use stats for a flesh golem. Advance the Hit Dice as the molting progresses.

SOIL STALKER

These animal predators resemble carnivorous plants. Their lower body is composed of a vast network of interconnected tendrils used for locomotion. At the top of the torso, two tentacles and a cluster of red pustules surround a mouth, which pulsates and excretes acid. To move through the ground, the creature releases acid to soften the soil. It usually lurks near the surface, where it can dissolve living matter with its acid and then draw in the liquefied remains.

Use stats for ankhegs, but increase the burrowing speed by 10 feet.

TEMPORAL HUNTER

These enigmatic creatures feed off of temporal energy. Resembling a tadpole, the creature has short spiny ridges across its brow and a row of horny protrusions across its back. It moves quickly through space, and is able to travel across both vertical and horizontal surfaces. They are able to shift back and forth from the Ethereal Plane, and use this ability to hunt prey. They attack with their tails, channeling raw temporal energy that sickens time-based creatures.

Use stats for phase spiders.

TWO-HEADED SPECKLED GNASHER

Scholars believe this nasty critter may be related to the hydra due to its multiple heads and its ability to regenerate. This rubbery, snake-like creature possesses two serpentine heads jutting from its bony neck. Its vertebrae range from small barbs at the tip of its tail to the massive set of spikes that protrudes from the base of its neck. The gnasher bites its prey with both heads, and then uses the bony protrusions in its neck to obliterate the remains for easy consumption.

Use stats for trolls.

BLACK SHEEP

BY NICHOLAS LOGUE
BY KYLE STANLEY HUNTER

A PC's background can be a touchy subject. While some players enjoy writing complex back-stories full of intriguing hooks for the campaign, others simply create a long series of castoff orphans, or worse, leave the character's entire background up to the DM. The next time this happens, rather than accepting an inferior story, try saddling the PC with some less than savory relations. If a player in your game leaves his character's family background up to you, feel free to choose one or more black sheep from the following list to spice up their lives.

1. The PC is plagued with a delinquent rogue of a younger brother who drops the name of his respectable PC elder whenever he gets himself into trouble, consistently dragging the character into sticky situations.

2. The PC has a cousin with a gambling problem, on the run from relentless loan sharks. The PC must appease the debtors with hard-earned gold before they "collect" on his cousin's life.

3. The PC has a hopelessly romantic and incredibly unattractive sister who is always asking the PC to set her up with the character's friends (especially the other party members).

4. The PC has a hopelessly romantic sister who is always trying to set up her stern, taciturn adventurer sibling with one of her friends.

5. Some mothers are absolutely certain their child is destined for success. The PC's mom constantly pushes the character to take on the most noteworthy (and dangerous) quests possible in order to prove himself. Sometimes she even accepts offers for perilous quests on the PC's behalf without consulting her child first.

6. The PC is cursed with a wannabe younger brother who constantly tries to tag along with the party. The youth sneaks after them, stowing away on supply wagons or following from a distance, and perpetually finds himself captured by the PC's enemies.

7. The PC has a disapproving father who is waiting for the character to grow out of her "childish adventuring phase." Dad may even sabotage the PC's success in order to convince her that adventuring is not her cup of tea.

8. Some mother-in-laws are a real drag. Others, like the PC's, secretly run an underground slavery ring. The party may be hired to expose and eradicate the slave ring only to find the PC's mother-in-law at its helm.

9. A wizard PC's brother with no magical powers of his own constantly rides the character's coat tails, selling phony magic potions and trinkets to unsuspecting buyers. When the customers find out they have been duped, they seek out the PC for a little payback.

10. The PC has a bastard half-brother who resents the attention the character always got from mother and father. The bastard tries to outdo the PC in every way, even seeking to cause the character to fail in his or her endeavors, just to prove in the eyes of their parents that the bastard is the better child.

11. Every PC has a crazy uncle. This unstable but incredibly lovable uncle invents bizarre magical contraptions that malfunction and sometimes explode. The uncle always insists that the PCs take the latest prototype with them on their next adventure to test it out for him.

12. The annoying and talentless bard niece of a PC dogs the party's every step, composing awful ballads about the character's exploits. These onerous tunes make the PC the laughing stock of every tavern and wayside inn.

13. Some fathers are beastly. Some are werewolves. Dad gets hairy and tries to slake his thirst for blood every full moon. The PC may not even know his own father is behind the monthly killing sprees.

14. The PC has an undead uncle no one talks about at family gatherings. The lich/vampire/mummy masterminds villainous plans the PC must thwart.

15. A self-righteous paladin sister beleaguers a PC, constantly lecturing the PC and his friends. Later on in the campaign this same sister may lose her faith, becoming a blackguard in the service of the evil god worshiped by the PC's enemies.

16. The PC's older brother has always looked out for her since childhood. Unfortunately, with the PC all grown up, the older brother does not understand that his "kid sister" is now a skilled adventurer quite capable of taking care of herself. This elder brother constantly tries to stand up for the PC, often leading to embarrassing situations, and sometimes the elder brother (not a skilled adventurer himself) gets into trouble with dangerous adversaries of the PC.

17. The PC's father is just downright sleazy. He ran around on the PC's mother with a woman half her age. Nowadays whenever he turns up, he hits on every woman associated with the PC, disrupting the harmony of the group.

18. The PC's uncle is a drunk. What's more, the uncle amuses himself by regaling the PC's comrades, friends, and even enemies with embarrassing tidbits from the character's childhood.

19. The PC's older sister is an assassin of unsurpassed skill with a reputation for completing any job she takes. Unfortunately, she is assigned to eliminate one of the PC's friends or comrades. The PC must try to stay her hand, forcing her to choose between her reputation and his friend. If the assassin chooses her reputation, the PC may be forced to choose between his sister's and his comrade's life.

20. The PC's father is a racist. Dad has no tolerance for the PC's comrades of diverse racial background and often embarrasses the character by expressing his views in front of the PC's friends and fellow party members.

21. The PC's father is a powerful aristocrat renowned for the mistreatment of his subjects and his unquenchable sadistic streak. Dad delights in burning villages, slaughtering peasant folk, and committing other atrocities. Everywhere the character goes their father's despicable reputation precedes them, closing most doors and making allies scarce.

22. The PC's cousin is married to a wealthy nobleman. She is constantly being kidnapped by bandits and rebels who demand a hefty ransom. The stingy nobleman takes advantage of his wife's adventurer relation by enlisting their aid in her rescue instead of handing over his gold.

23. The PC's mother is a maid at a wayside inn. Enemies belittle the PC as nothing more than the son of a peasant, and may threaten to cause troubles for the PC's mother the next time they pass through the region just to add insult to injury. The character doesn't know his father; he could be someone who works at the inn, or might even be a famous hero who stopped at the inn almost a year ago.

24. The PC's mother is one of the most impressive adventurers the world has ever known. No matter what deeds the character accomplishes, the PC is always overshadowed by mom's greatness and dismissed offhandedly as the child of a woman whose boots she will never be able to fill.

25. The PC's long-lost twin has become the leader of a bizarre and dangerous cult dedicated to an evil deity. Mistaken for the cult leader, the PC is either hunted by the authorities or constantly accosted by the followers of the cult asking for his dark blessing.

MALEK

EVIL ENTOMBED

INSPIRED BY

Dungeons & Dragons

Wrath of the Dragon God

BY MIKE MCARTOR, F. WESLEY SCHNEIDER, AND JAMES L. SUTTER

BY KYLE HUNTER

In the early days of the Empire of Ismir it was not uncommon for those in positions of power to possess a certain amount of magical ability. After all, what better magistrate than one who can divine a convicted man's guilt or locate stolen goods and kidnapped citizens? Of all those mystical authority figures, few are more responsible for the eventual public backlash than a minor noble by the name of Malek the Conjurer.

Gifted with an innate understanding of magic and a comfortable (if not extravagant) estate, it's hard to understand why a promising young lord like Malek would choose Juiblex, Demon Lord of Slimes and Oozes, as his patron—but choose he did. While rooting out a cell of Juiblex's worshipers, Malek's attempt to destroy the cult's idol brought him into direct communion with the Faceless Lord. Intrigued by the power offered by the demon, the young magistrate began a personal crusade against the faithful of Juiblex, bringing the criminals to justice while covertly claiming their blasphemous artifacts. Over time his study turned to worship, eventually culminating in his first crime in the demon lord's name: teleporting into a noble's bedchamber in the dead of night and whisking her away to torture and sacrifice.

Such corruption can only be hidden for so long, however, and when the truth finally came to light, retribution was swift and grisly. Led by Malek's parents, a mob of nobles and commoners alike captured him in the act of hacking a young maiden apart in his bathtub. Without bothering with a trial, the crowd hanged him, drew and quartered him, and dipped the resulting chunks in acid, effectively bringing the unholy sacrifices to their end.

Or so they thought. In actuality, Malek had prepared for such an eventuality long beforehand, and the unfortunate creature dismembered by the vengeful townsfolk was a cunningly-prepared duplicate. From a series of hidden lairs scattered across the continent, Malek continued to grow in power, taking great care never to pick more than a few victims from any one town. As time went on, legends emerged of an evil wizard who kidnapped maidens on their wedding nights, and Malek's place in the pantheon of childhood bogeymen was secured.

In the end, the overconfidence resulting from his narrow escape proved his undoing. In the process of constructing a powerful scrying pool to aid his kidnappings, Malek offended his demon lord by referring to their relationship as a partnership. Rather than smiting the impertinent upstart, Juiblex held the pseudopod that serves as his tongue and quietly designed a flaw into the scrying pool, causing it to malfunction several months later in the middle of Malek's

teleport spell. Instead of a maiden's bedchamber, the lump of meat that was once a wizard materialized directly inside a brick wall.

While by all rights that should have been the end of him, Malek's spirit was stubborn. Gradually, what was left of his soul seeped into the wall itself, suffusing it with his taint but also further imprisoning him within. Decades of physical and spiritual confinement served only to corrode Malek's already warped psyche, leaving him to impotently rail against fate and his former demonic patron. Yet recently, sensing the invasion of one of his crumbling, ancient sanctums, the untapped wells of rage in the evil wizard's lingering spirit have roused his decayed form. Buttressed and empowered by the very rock that restrained him for so long, Malek again walks the land.

APPEARANCE

Although Malek is a ghost, his form is not the ethereal malice of most spirits. Bound to both his corpse and the rock that surrounds it, Malek appears as a particularly morbid elemental of earth and stone. Vaguely humanoid in shape, the rotted hunk of flesh that once contained Malek's consciousness remains visibly entombed within the earthen shell. The rumble of an avalanche marks his passage, and the stench of decay precedes him like a fanfare.

TACTICS

Malek's combat style reflects the split nature of his new form. Spiritually bound to his body and the stone surrounding it, Malek is treated as constantly using his ghostly malevolence ability to possess the wall he was entombed in (treated as a Large earth elemental). As this rocky body is the wizard's only form, spells or effects that might normally force a ghost to leave its possessed body do not affect him. However, even though the elemental body is not undead, Malek can still be turned as an 11-HD undead creature.

While he still retains much of the cunning and spellcasting ability that gained him such power as a human, taking 30 or more points of damage brings out Malek's elemental body's unthinking rage. Invigorated by a power that he never possessed in life, he eagerly uses his push ability to physically grind enemies beneath his earthen fists.

DEVELOPMENT

Before his death and subsequent rebirth, Malek created a number of caches—small dungeons scattered about in innocuous or hard-to-reach locations—each guarding a powerful magic item acquired during his affiliation with Juiblex. (For a sample cache, see the film *Dungeons & Dragons: Wrath of the Dragon God* and "Servant of Decay," the *Dungeon* adventure contained on the DVD.) Adventuring parties disturbing these caches or possessing any of Malek's former treasures (whether they know it or not) might be ripe for a visit from the jealous ghost.

Malek still harbors a deep grudge against the patron who betrayed him, and cultists of Juiblex might well find themselves in need of PC protection from the vengeful monstrosity, throwing players into an awkward lesser-of-two-evils conundrum.

Malek CR 13

Male human ghost wizard 11

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)

Monster Manual 117

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1

Aura horrific appearance (DC 17)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Terran

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12

hp 71 (11 HD)

Immune incorporeal traits, undead traits

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +5

Special Atk malevolence (DC 17), manifestation, telekinesis (DC 17)

Spells Prepared (CL 13th):

6th—*disintegrate* (DC 19)

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 18), silent maximized *magic missile*

4th—maximized *magic missile*, *wall of fire* (2)

3rd—*dispel magic* (2), empowered *magic missile* (3)

2nd—silent *magic missile* (4), *mirror image*

1st—*magic missile* (5)

Abilities Str —, Dex 12, Con —, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 14

SQ rejuvenation, summon familiar (currently has no familiar), turn resistance +4

Feats Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Mastery (2)

Skills Concentration +14, Craft (alchemy) +17, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Spellcraft +17

Note on Spells Malek no longer has a spellbook, so he can only prepare spells he knows from his two Spell Mastery feats: *baleful polymorph*, *disintegrate*, *dispel magic*, *magic missile*, *mirror image*, and *wall of fire*.

Malevolence (Su) While using his malevolence ability to possess a Large earth elemental, Malek has the following changed statistics.

Init +3

AC 18, touch 9, flat-footed 18

Immune elemental traits, undead traits

Fort +7, **Ref** +0, **Will** +8

Spd 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +11 melee (2d8+7)

Grp +16

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Attack Option push

Special Atk earth mastery

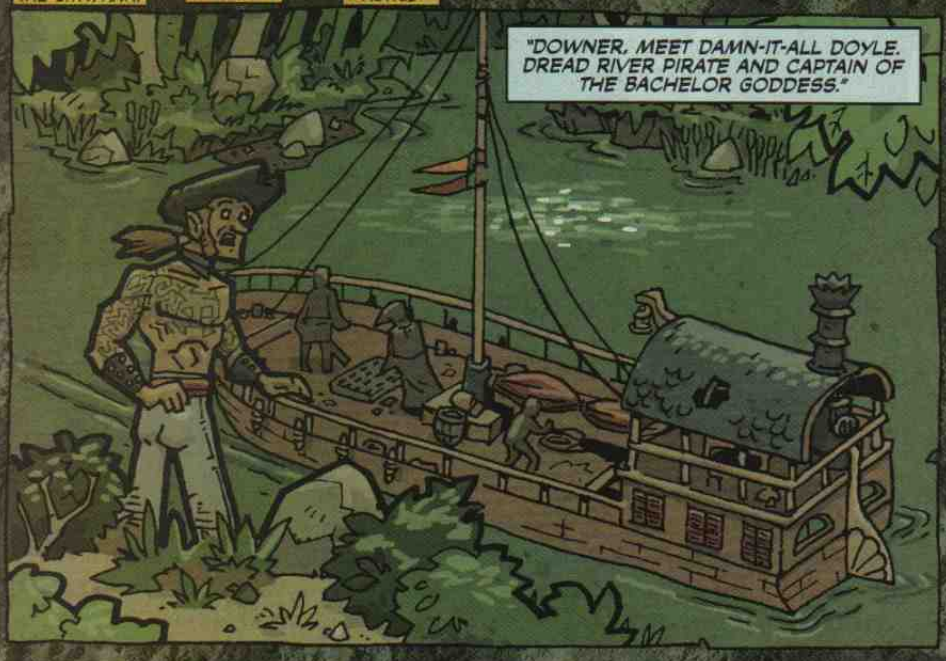
Abilities Str 25, Dex 8, Con 19, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 14

Skills Concentration +18

Downer VII

Fool's Errand

"THE GOODY-GOOD ELF BROAD SAYS,'HOW COULD YOU KILL THEIR CHIEF AND MEDICINE MAN OVER A GAME?! THEY WERE OUR ALLIES.' AND I SAY, 'I'M SORRY, I THOUGHT YOU HAD HEARD OF DROW BEFORE.' CHEATING, MURDER AND MAYHEM ARE ALL PART OF THE GAME, SO WE HAVE A WHOLE COMMUNITY OF PSYCHO WILD ELVES ON OUR TAIL. AT LEAST NOW THIS STUPID QUEST IS BACK ON TRACK."



Story and art by Kyle Stanley Hunter. Lettering by Sean Glenn. Downer is ©2006 Kyle Stanley Hunter. A Super Unicorn production. www.superunicorn.com

FHARLANGHN SMILES ON ME. TWO BEAUTIFUL CREATURES GRACE MY PRESENCE.
WELCOME ABOARD, LADIES.
OH BROTHER. I'VE HEARD OF YOU.
SORRY, SONNY, GHOSTS ARE BAD LUCK ON THE WATER.
I THOUGHT WOMEN WERE.
THAT'S AT SEA.
ON RIVERS IT'S GHOSTS.
SHOVE OFF.
JUST SCOUT AHEAD FOR US, LOOPS. SO, SHIRTLESS DAN, WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT OUR DESTINATION, ZUG ZWANG?
TOUGH TOWN.
MR. KUCKOO HERE AND I FLED THE WAR IN OUBLIETTE, BUT IT'S NO BETTER UP HERE.
I MEAN, ZWANG IS MONSTER FRIENDLY--
"-- BUT A LITTLE TOO MONSTER FRIENDLY."
"THEY HAVE THE MOST BRUTAL FORCED PIT FIGHTING I'VE EVER SEEN."
MEANWHILE, AT THE GRIEVING GRUGACH VILLAGE...
TO BE CONTINUED

DUNGEON #129

MAP & HANDOUT SUPPLEMENT

DUNGEON
FACING FURRY FIENDS OF THE FORGOTTEN REALMS
RAMPAGING RAPTORS • WEREWEASELS • CHANGELINGS • TRUE GHOULS
MONTE COOK'S DUNGEONCRAFT • BOWNER • MT. ZOGON

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Ramón Pérez

Ramón Pérez

MURDER IN OAKBRIDGE

by Uri Kurlianchik

A killer has come to Oakbridge, and she won't stop her murderous campaign until she exacts revenge against a group of ex-carnies who have come to Sharn in an attempt to start new lives in the aftermath of the Last War. An EBERRON adventure for 5th-level characters.

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Ziki

Ramón Pérez

Kroga

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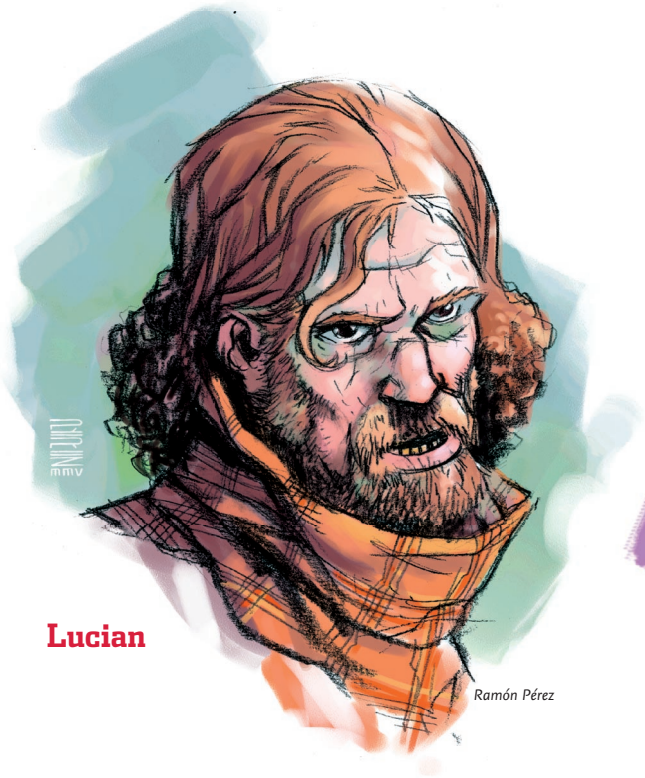
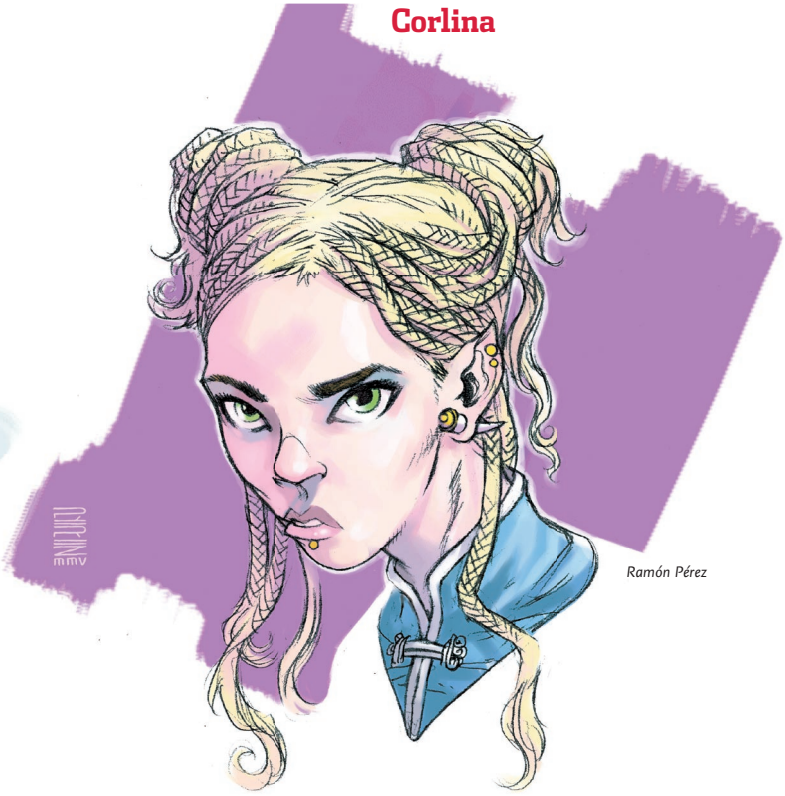


Lucian

Ramón Pérez



Corlina

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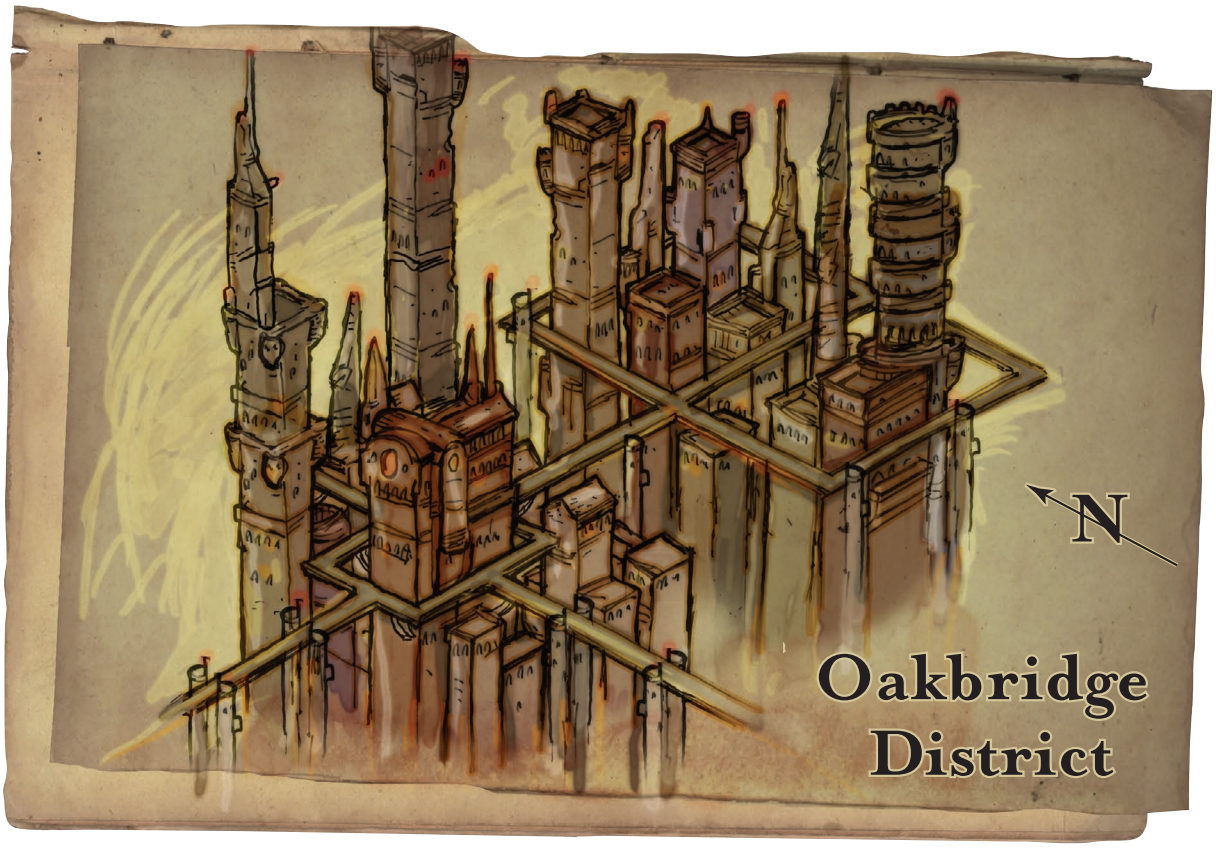

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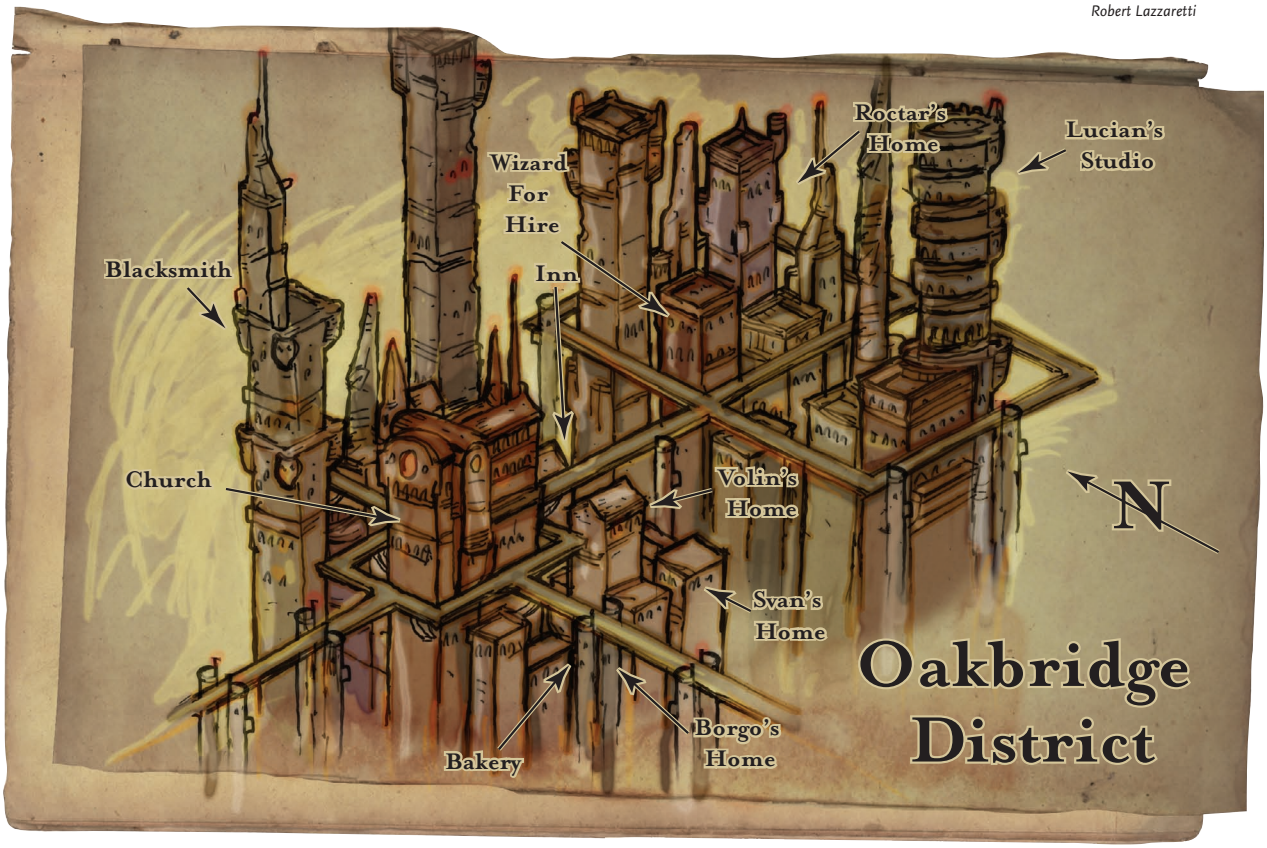

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Joachim Barrum

A GATHERING OF WINDS

by Wolfgang Baur

When the PCs return to Diamond Lake to consult with their friend Allustan, they find the town in shambles and Allustan missing. Locals tell tales of a terrible dragon's rampage through town. Unfortunately for the characters, the dragon is only the beginning. An Age of Worms Adventure Path scenario for 11th-level characters.

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Steve Prescott

Steve Prescott

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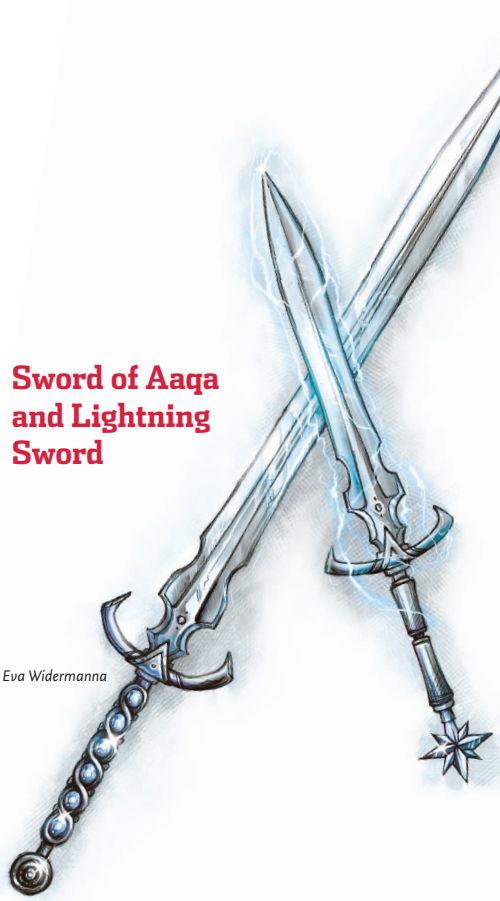
Moreto

Eva Widermann

Sword of Aaqa and Lightning Sword



Eva Widermanna

The Black Seal

Eva Widermanna

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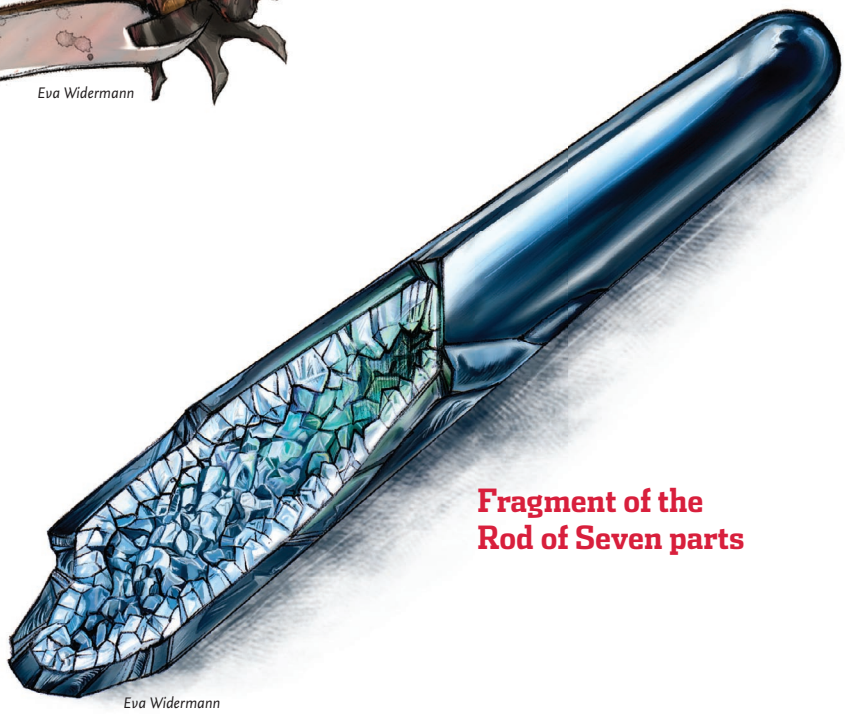
Augerric

Eva Widermann



Fragment of the Rod of Seven parts

Eva Widermann

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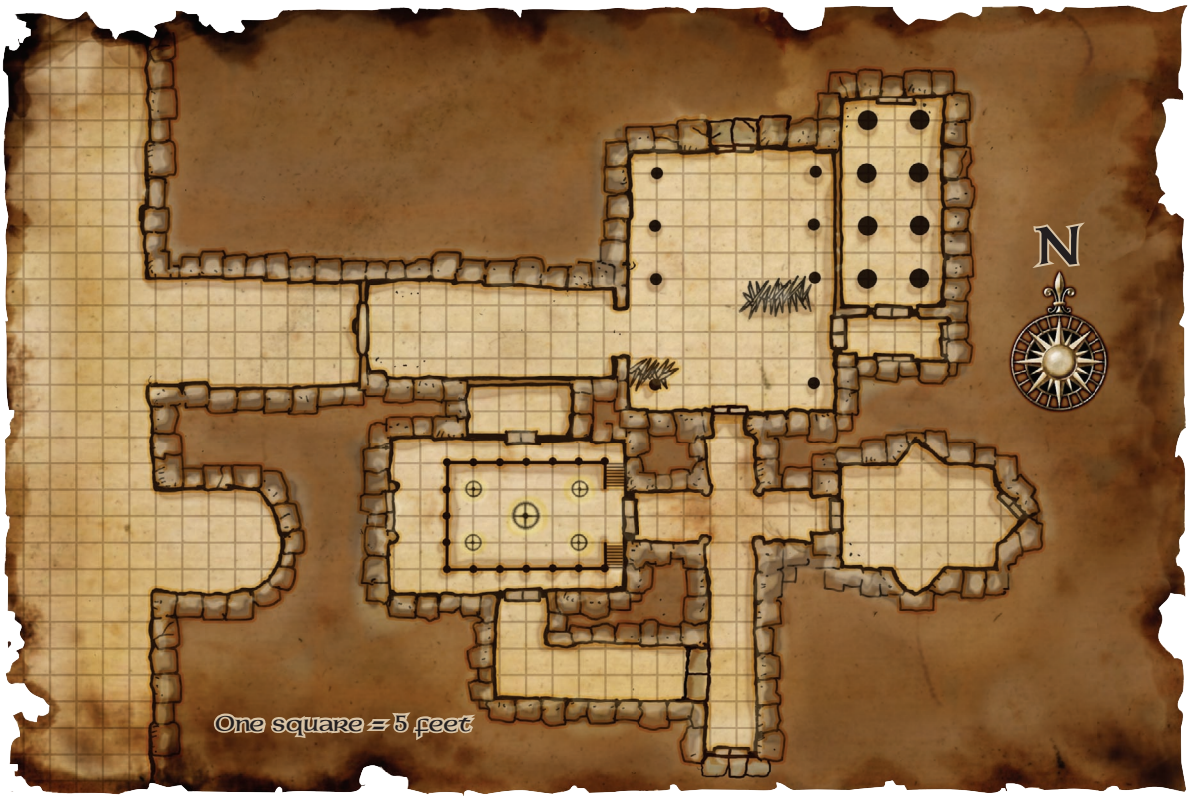

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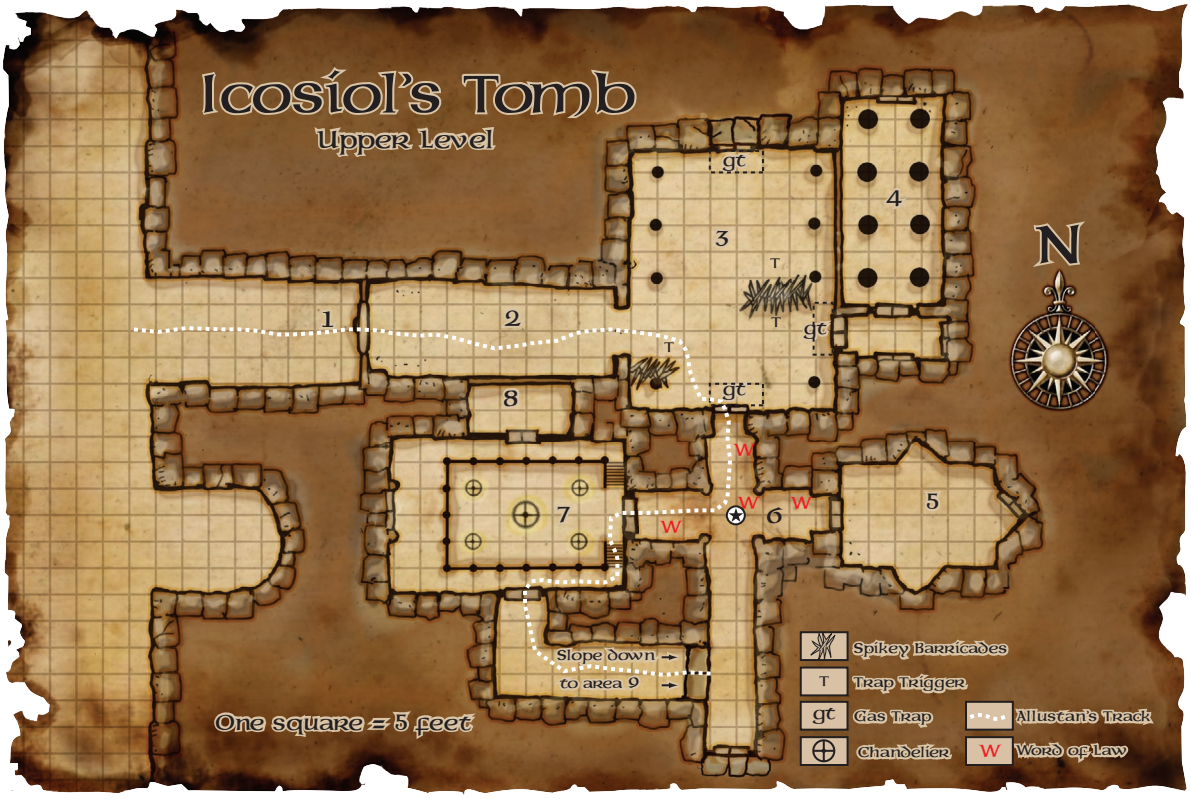

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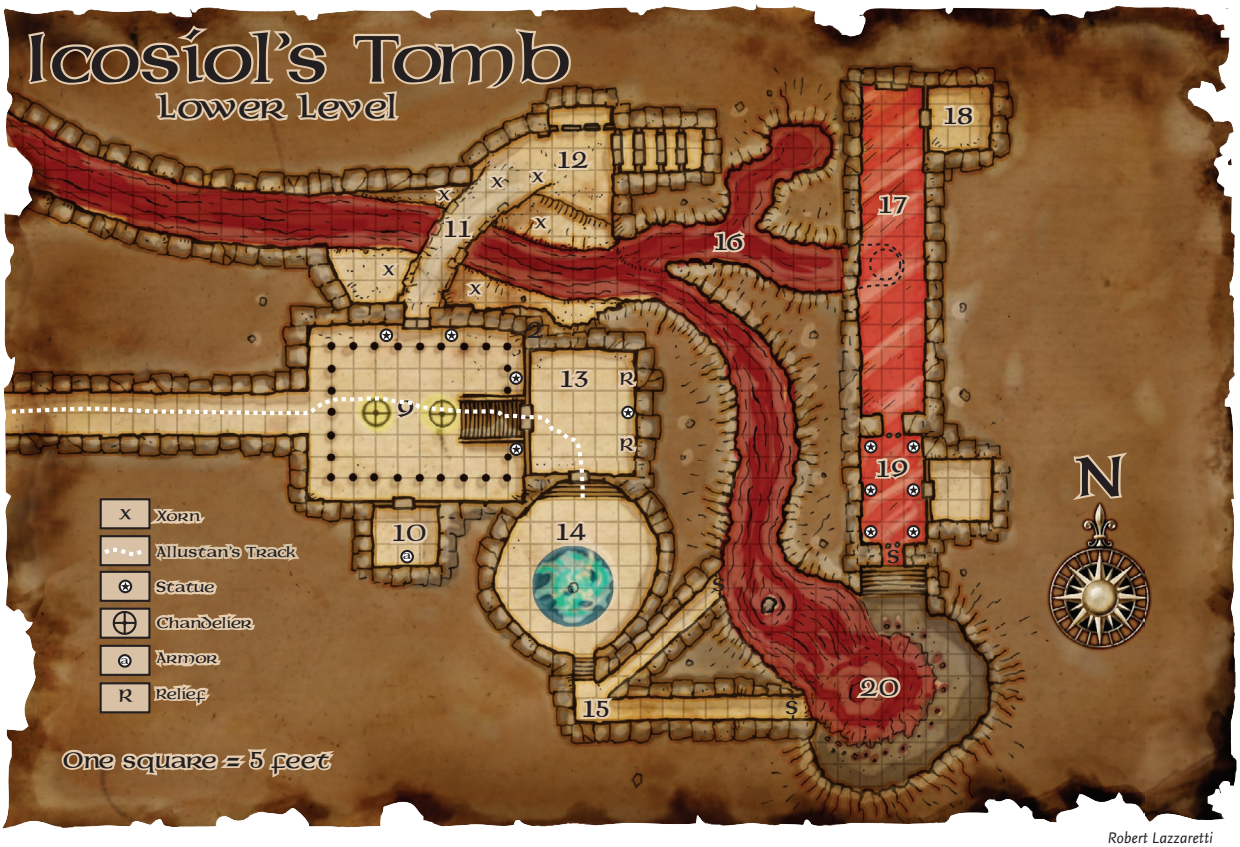

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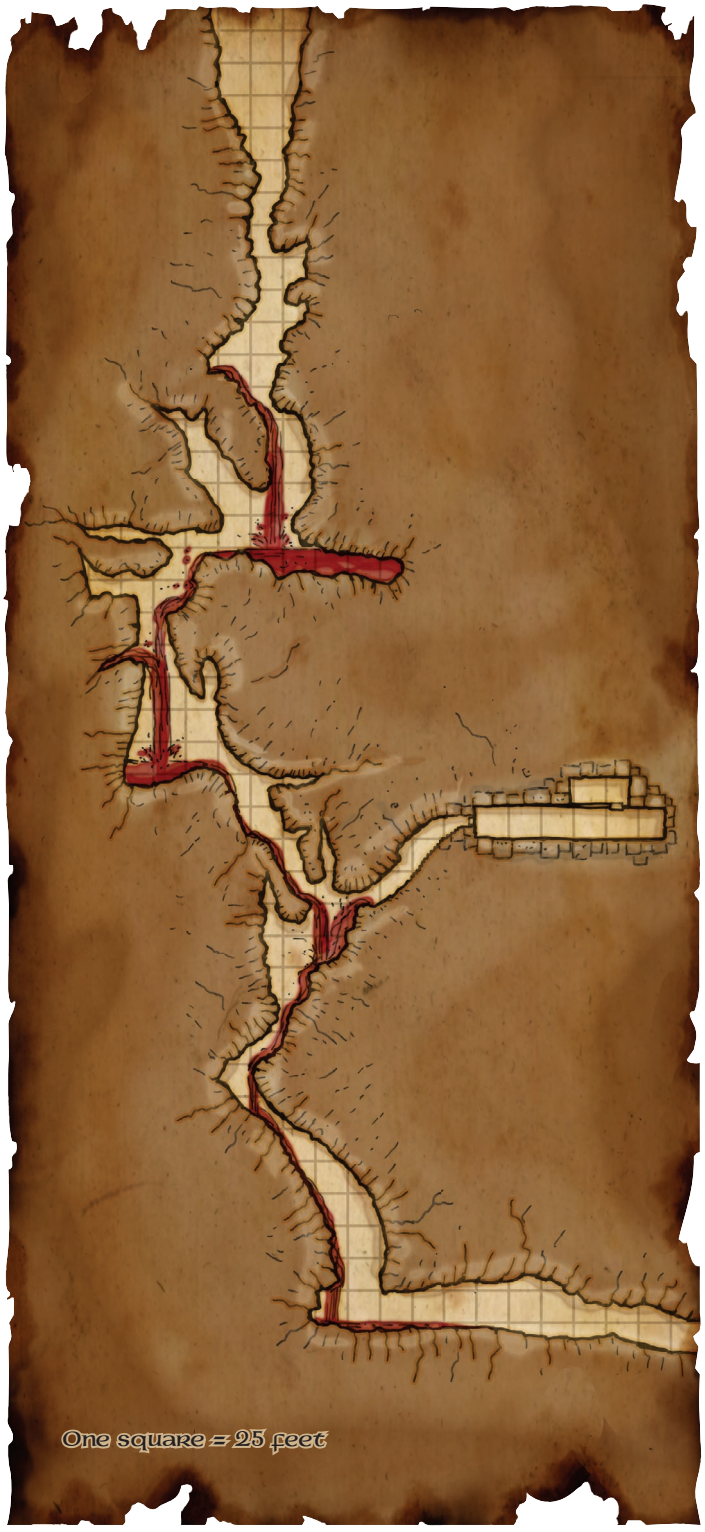

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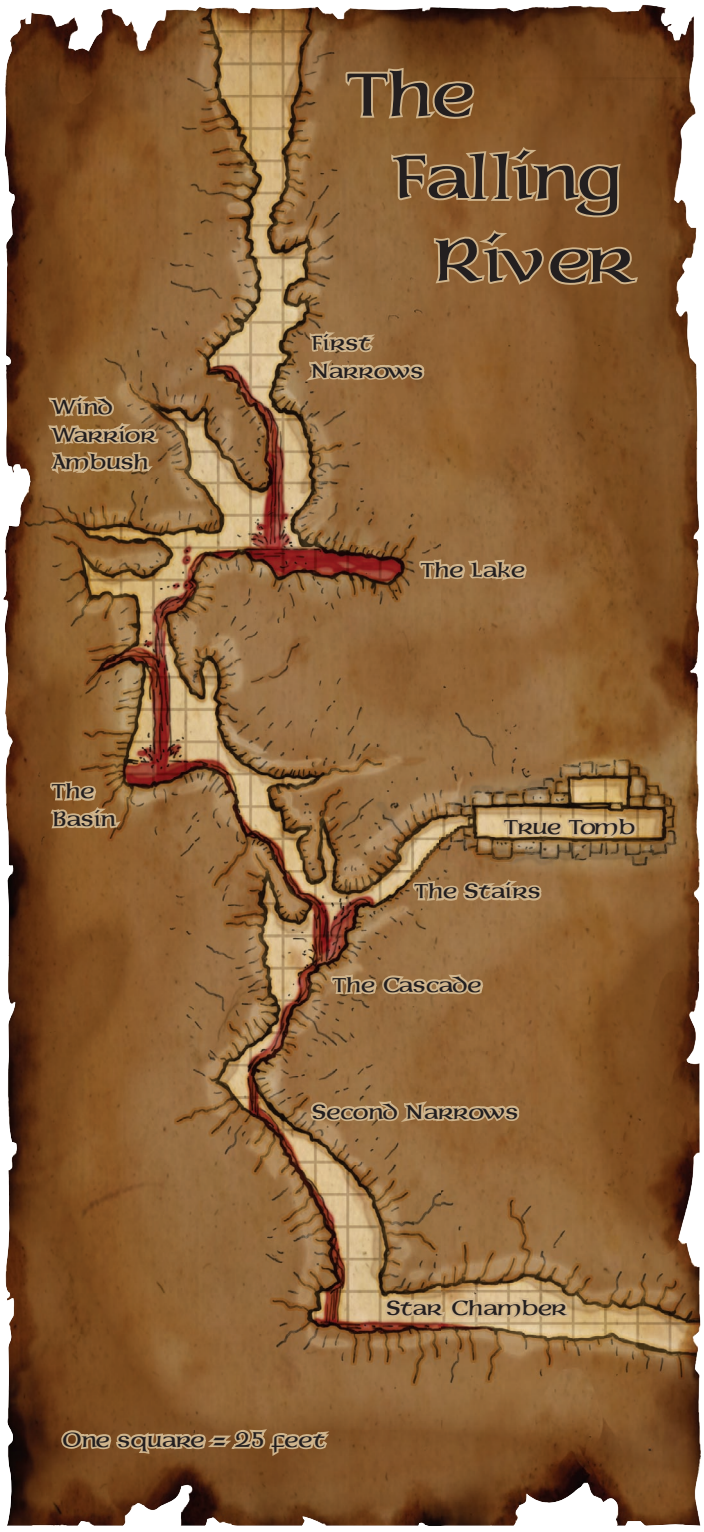

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RUNNING "A GATHERING OF WINDS" IN THE FORGOTTEN REALMS

by Eric L. Boyd

Conversion notes for Mintarn (Alhaster and Redhand), the Redeye tribe (Twisted Branch tribe), Manzorian (Malchor Harpell), and Magepoint (Longsaddle) have already been mentioned in conversion sidebars for earlier adventures in the Adventure Path.

Genies of Ancient Calimshan

Circa –7,800 dr, a large force of Djen (Wind Dukes, effectively noble djinn) arrived in the areas around present-day Calimport, led by the djinni lord Calim. The Djen spoke Vaati, the base language from which Auran and Alzhedo are derived. (Anyone speaking either Auran or Alzhedo can attempt Decipher Script checks for Vaati inscriptions.) Although not concerned with bringing "Law" to the Realms, the Wind Dukes of Calim sought to subjugate all forms of elemental magic to their will, proving the supremacy of elemental air and their goddess Akadi (Zostra).

Intent on colonizing a "barbaric" world rich in resources both magical and mundane, the Djen commanded a host of lesser djinn, jann, marids, genasi, enslaved humans (ancestors of today's Calishites), enslaved hin (ancestors of the Sword Coast's halfling population), and a handful of marids. After their arrival, the Djen and their servants began clearing and seizing all the lands south of the Marching Mountains, which they claimed as the Calim Empire (Aaqa). At its peak, the Calim Empire encompassed all of modern day Calimshan, except for lands along the River Memnon. Initial conflicts with the Proud Peoples (elves and dwarves) ended in truce, and the Djen drove the dragons and giants out of the Marching Mountains. The alliance of djinn and marids collapsed, leading a series of battles known as the Steam Clashes and culminating in the destruction of the marid city of Ahjuutal.

Circa –6,800 dr, almost a thousand years to the day after the arrival of the Djen, a great horde of efreet called the Army of Fire (Army of Chaos), led by the great pasha Memnon (Miska the Wolf Spider) in service to Kossuth (Queen of Chaos), emerged through a heretofore unknown portal just north of the River Agis (now known as the River Memnon). While the Djen prepared for the inevitable conflict to come, the efreet establish the realm of Memnonnar and found the settlements of Memnon, Myratma, and Shoonach. In –6,500 dr, 200 years of skirmishing erupted into open warfare, beginning the Era of Skyfire. Over the next four centuries, Memnon and Calim brought their forces to bear against each other in 22 cataclysmic battles, culminating in the Battle of Teshyllal Fields (Battle of Pesh). This last battle between the genie empires was ended by elven High Magic, which bound the endlessly warring genie lords and many of their most powerful followers into a single gem, now known as the Calimemnon Crystal, and transformed the Teshyllal Fields (Fields of Pesh) into the Calim Desert.

Further details about this period may be found in Empires of the Shining Sea [2nd Edition] and Calimport [2nd Edition].

Icosiol's Tomb

Icosiol was one of Calim's greatest generals. The legendary Djen died during the Battle of Teshyllal Fields after employing his liege's fabled Scepter of Calim to shatter a newly created portal through which Memnon was expecting reinforcements. Having escaped imprisonment in the Calimemnon Crystal through death, Icosiol's corpse was one of the few sets of remains of the leading genies to be interred after the battle. His tomb was constructed by the surviving genies who clung to power for some four decades after the Battle of Teshyllal Fields.

Icosiol's Tomb lies hundreds of miles south of the Whispering Cairn, deep below the Calim Desert. If the PCs somehow manage to travel up from the tomb through 1,000 feet of bedrock and sand, they emerge in a barren stretch of desert. To the west, they spy bright flashes resulting from the sun hitting the Spinning Keep of Siri'wadjen, which houses the Calimemnon Crystal. If the PCs make their way westward far enough to make out the details of the Spinning Keep, a DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check correctly identifies this desert as the Calim Desert. There is no physical entrance to Icosiol's Tomb from this region, and if the PCs decide to explore the area, you'll need to develop additional adventures as you see fit. (See Empires of the Shining Sea [2nd Edition] for inspiration.)

Area 5 is home to Nadim yr Bluefin, Sultan of Currentshire (Antyress Redpike, Earl of Coalchester), a marid, and Drowened (Smoughed), a huge water elemental. Their oaths to the Djen were given in recompense for their alliance with fallen Ajhuutal during the Steam Clashes millennia ago. The temperature here is extremely cold; creatures inside take 1d6 cold damage per minute. In addition, creatures must make a Fortitude save every 5 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Those wearing metal armor or touching metal are affected as if by chill metal.

Traps in the tomb (area 6, 18, and 22) triggered by the presence of a non-Lawful or chaotic creature are actually triggered by the presence of a non-Chaotic or lawful creature, respectively. Spell effects from the Law domain are replaced by their counterparts in the Chaos domain (e.g. word of chaos for dictum, dispel chaos for dispel law, etc.). Antipathy effects affect lawful creatures, not chaotic creatures. The depictions of demons in the tomb (area 7) are replaced by creatures of elemental fire (e.g. efreeti for glabrezus, salamanders for hezrous, harsssafs for vrocks, etc.). Likewise, depictions of creatures of Law (area 7, 13, and 19) are placed by creatures of elemental air (e.g. immoths for inevitables, noble djinn for wind dukes, etc.).

Zifforian was a djinni who survived the Battle of Teshyllal Fields. He agreed to be interred in the tomb after its construction, but the Calim Empire's rapid collapse in the four decades that followed meant that he was never relieved of duty.

The three words needed to enter the True Tomb (area 22) are "Akadi", "Calim", and "Icosiol." The phrase inscribed above the door handles to the True Tomb reads "Dare not enter the tomb of Icosiol, Lord of the Calim Empire, beloved of Akadi."

Oculus demons were oft-employed as slaves of the efreet in the waning days of Memnonar.

Treasures of Icosiel

Icosiel's tomb holds four treasures of the Djen: the Lightning Sword, the Ring of the Djen (Ring of the Wind Dukes), the Mosaic of Icosiel (Seal of Law), the Sword of Teshyllal (Sword of Aaqa), and one piece of the Shattered Scepter of Calim (Rod of Seven Parts), formerly known as the Scepter of Calim (Rod of Law). The Sword of Teshyllal is a +2 anarchic mithral long sword. Nonchaotic characters who possess a single fragment of the Shattered Scepter of Calim risk becoming chaotic. Other powers of the items listed above remain unchanged.

The Scepter of Calim (Rod of Law) was a symbol of Calim's sovereignty in the lands of the Calim Empire until it was shattered by the elven High Mages of Keltormir. It is now known as the Shattered Scepter of Calim (Rod of Seven Parts).

The White Kingdom

The existence of the city of true ghouls is whispered of only in the highest councils of Guallidurth, the Temple City of Lolth that lies deep beneath the Calim Desert. The White Kingdom lies in the Lowerdark, hidden deep beneath the Lake of Radiant Mists. (See Underdark, page 173.)

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RUNNING "A GATHERING OF WINDS" IN EBERRON

by Keith Baker

In "A Gathering of Winds", characters venture into an ancient tomb in search of a powerful artifact. When converting the adventure to the Eberron Campaign Setting, consider the following ideas.

The Wind Dukes

The battle between the Wind Dukes and the Armies of Chaos was one part of the long war of the Age of Demons, which ended with the imprisonment of the rakshasa overlords; the Queen of Chaos and Miska the Wolf Spider were two of these spirits. But where do the Wind Dukes fit in? There are a number of possibilities. A character who succeeds at DC 25 skill checks on both Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (the planes) has heard of the Wind Dukes and various theories of their origin and nature. Here are just a few:

- The Wind Dukes came from the plane of Lamannia, home of the djinni and elementals of air and water. While this explains their strong connection to the elementals, scholars are troubled by the lack of evidence of a Wind Duke nation in the present day, and argue that there would be little incentive for spirits of other planes to come to Eberron.
- The Wind Dukes were originally dragons. They used magic to assume humanoid forms, only to be trapped permanently in these shapes by a rakshasa curse.
- The Wind Dukes were humans: the first human nation, a civilization that rose to power while giants and dragons were still savages. Proponents of this theory say that humans were the first children of the progenitor dragons, and that the dragons have deliberately hidden evidence of this mighty human empire to conceal humanity's potential from the people of the present day. These sages also claim that the gods of the Sovereign Host are in fact distorted legends of human heroes from the first age.
- The Wind Dukes were the forebears of titans and storm giants, and their power over the forces of air is reflected in the magic of their descendents. Despite the size of their descendents, the Wind Dukes were Medium creatures; their offspring grew in size even as their power was diminished. If this path is true, further secrets of the Wind Dukes may be hidden in the giant ruins of Xen'drik.

It's up to the DM to decide which (if any) of these theories is the truth. What is known is that the Wind Dukes were Medium humanoid creatures with tremendous magical might and the ability to bind elementals and outsiders—and that they were utterly destroyed in the war against the spawn of Khyber.

The name of Zostra, the lawful goddess of the Wind Dukes, can be changed to Zolarra; a character who makes a Knowledge (religion) check (DC 20) will see common elements between Zolarra and Dol Arrah, the Sovereign goddess of Honor and Sacrifice.

Ilthane

The dragons of Eberron are not a monolithic force. Dragotha has been corrupted by darkness and now serves the rakshasa overlord known as Katashka the Gatekeeper, and Ilthane and others do his bidding. Ilthane knows nothing of her master's true devotion, but she believes that Dragotha will show her the path to immortality… despite the long lifespan of a dragon, Ilthane still fears death.

The Silent Gallery (Area 7)

The description of the gallery includes the following sentence: "On outer spokes, similar surrenders of abyssal ghouls, vrocks, beholders, and chaotic froglike humanoids to the Wind Duke armies are depicted." As creatures of Xoriat, beholders were not present on Eberron during the Battle of Pesh. The bulk of the enemy forces were native outsiders—the rakshasa may still be known in the present day, but there were also spirits that have been bound since the fall of their masters and never seen by mortal eyes.

Conversing with Allustan (Area 14)

When the PCs meet with Allustan, the DM should pick one of the theories for the origin of the Wind Dukes for Allustan to champion. He explains that Icosiol was a great general of the Wind Dukes in the war against the spawn of Khyber, and that the Rod of Law was the only weapon ever created that could truly destroy one of the overlords of Khyber, although it shattered after it was used on Miska the Wolf Spider.

In general, Allustan will refer to the "Chaos Army" as the "forces of Khyber" or "spawn of Khyber," since, in point of fact, they were not all chaotic.

Allustan was certainly surprised to be attacked by a dragon, but if questioned on the matter will emphasize that, while the dragons fought the fiends in the first age, they are by no means noble or benevolent as a race. Dragons have their own agendas, and may be beholden to powers far older than human civilization.

Moreto and the White Kingdom (Area 21)

Khyber (the Underdark of Eberron) is a largely unexplored land filled with deadly mysteries. There's no reason that a nation of true ghouls couldn't be hidden in the darkness; perhaps they warred with the Dhakaani goblinoids or the minions of the daelkyr in ages past. If others learn of the White Kingdom, a group of followers of the Blood of Vol might fund an expedition to reach the ghoul nation, hoping to form an alliance with these powerful undead beings.

If you wish, the true ghouls of Eberron could continue to worship Mordiggian. However, it would be equally appropriate for them to worship the Keeper and the Shadow (claiming that the beneficent intervention of these deities is the source of their undead immortality), a variation of the Blood of Vol (though with no actual connection to the line of Vol), or even an imprisoned rakshasa rajah.

Occulus Demons

The Abyss is not part of the cosmology of Eberron. As the occulus demons were created to serve the Queen of Chaos—herself one of the overlords of the first age—the occulus demon should be considered to be a native outsider.

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Chad du Lac & Udon with Mark Sinclair & Gala Fernandez

Doug Williams

THE TWISTED RUN

by Wil Upchurch

The Beastlord Malar has had enough of the people of the Silver Marches trying to "civilize" the Northlands. Now, with the help of a powerful new weapon, his followers are set to cleanse the stain of Silverymoon from the land. A Forgotten Realms adventure for 17th-level characters.

Eric Deschamps

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Wereweasel

Eric Deschamps

Anth-Malar

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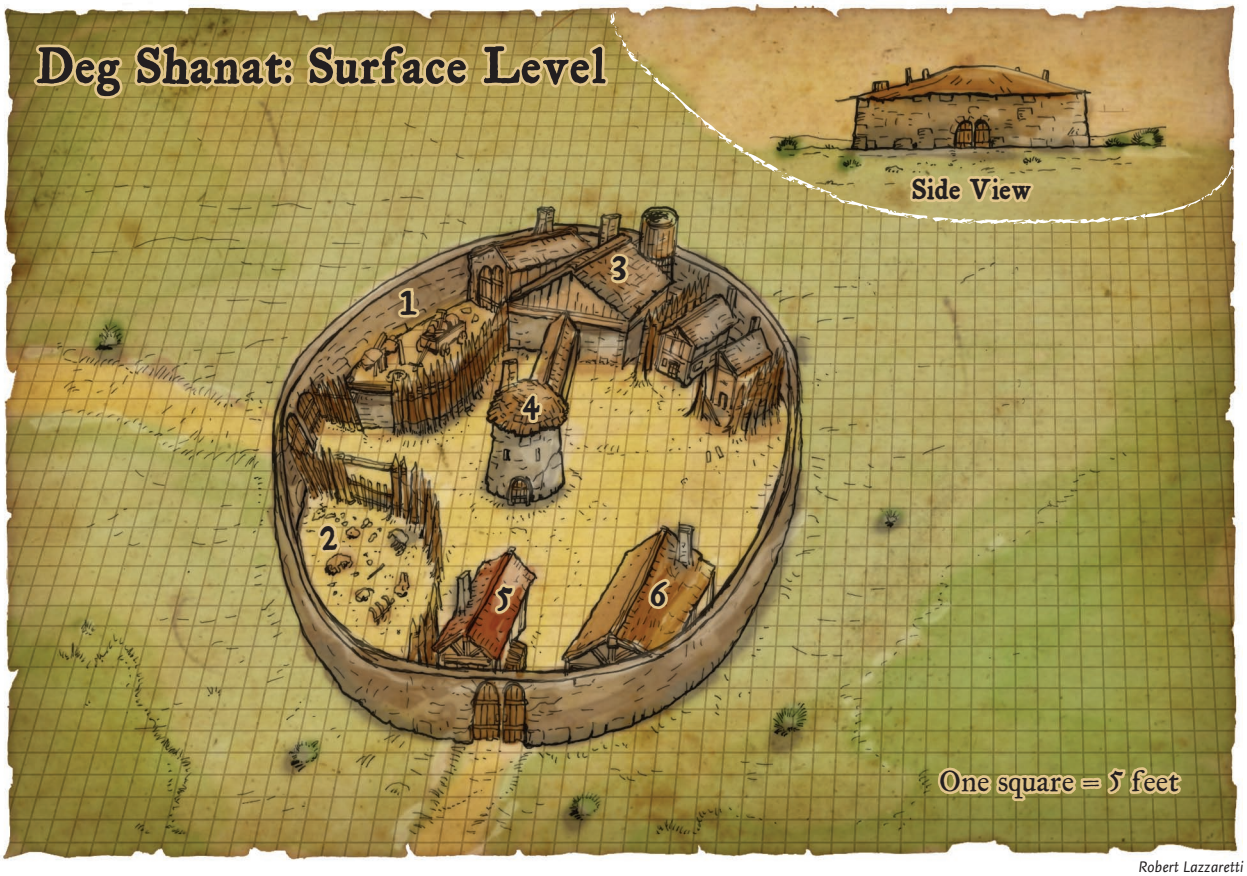

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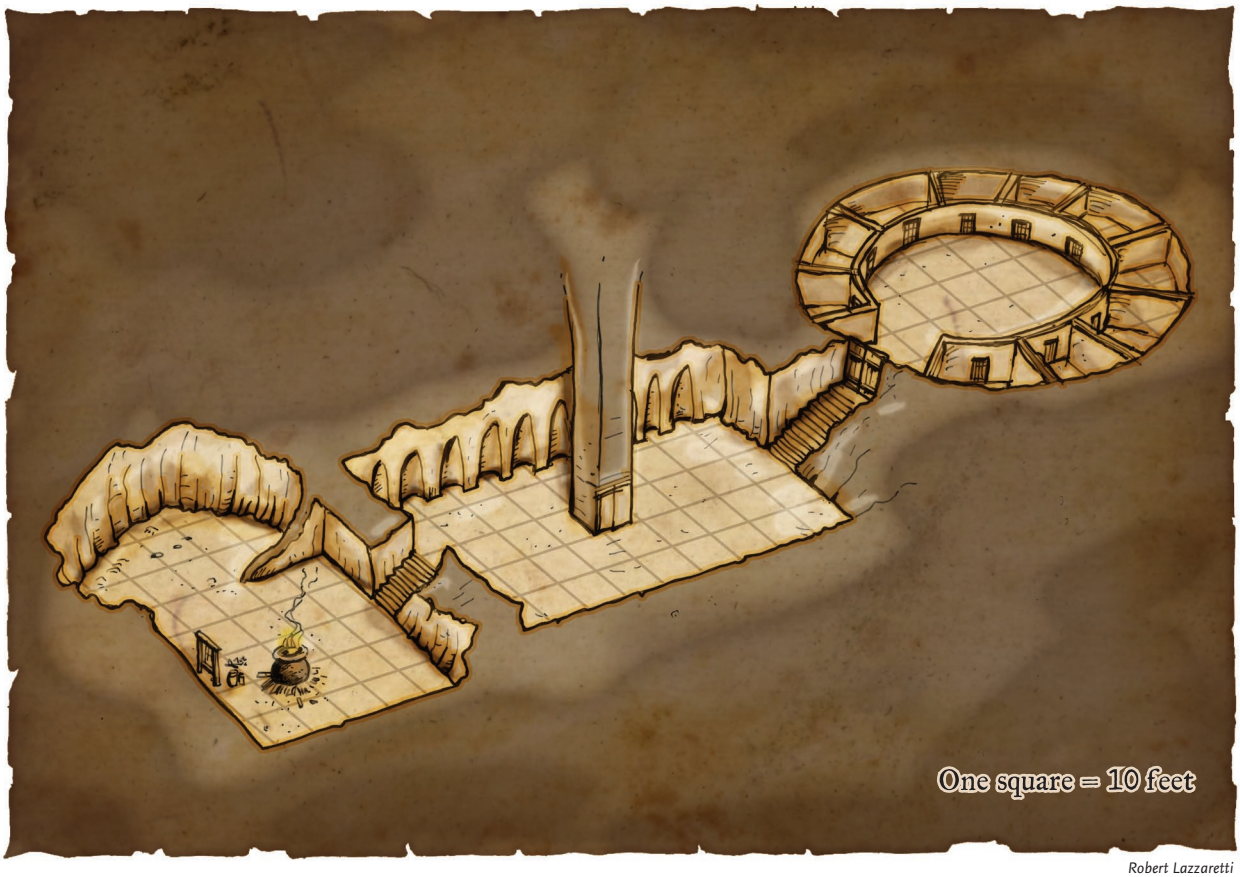

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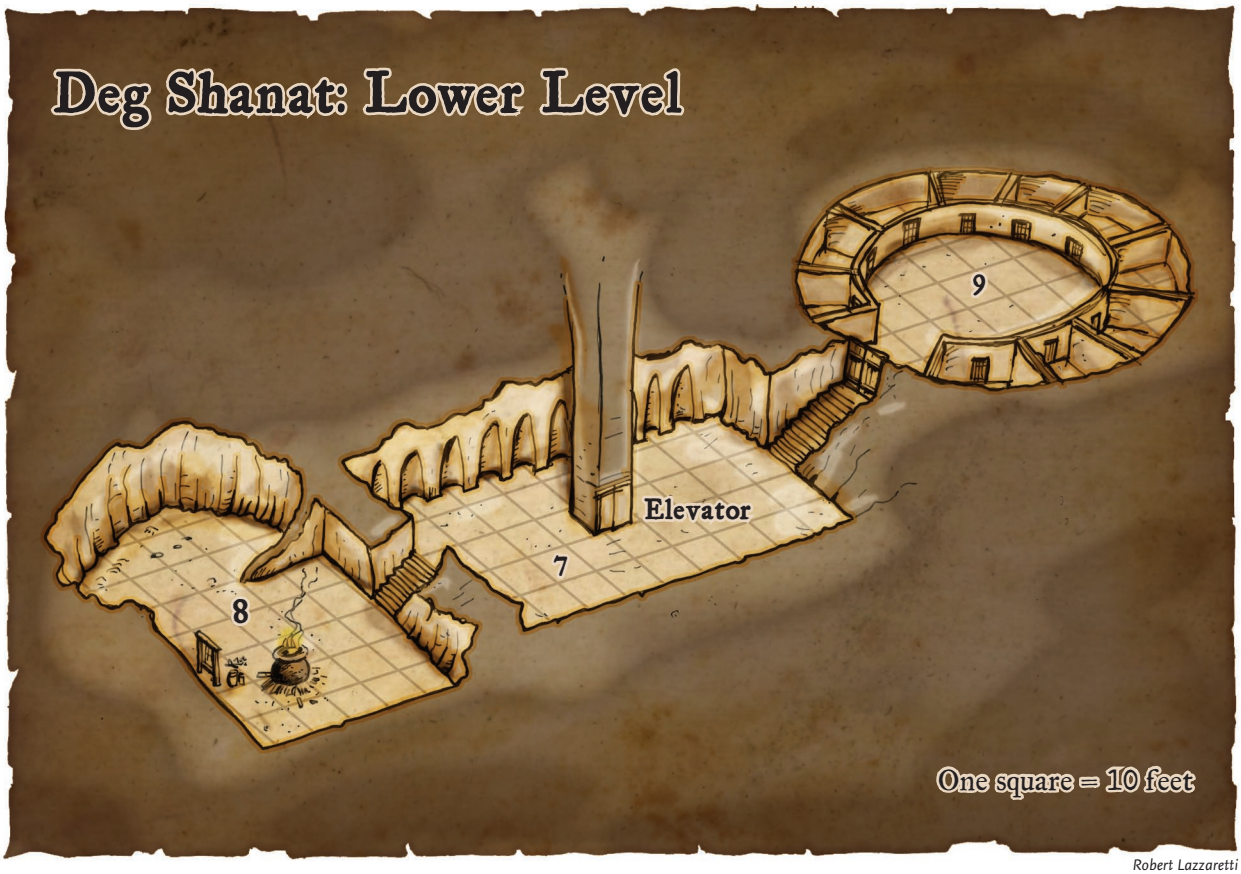

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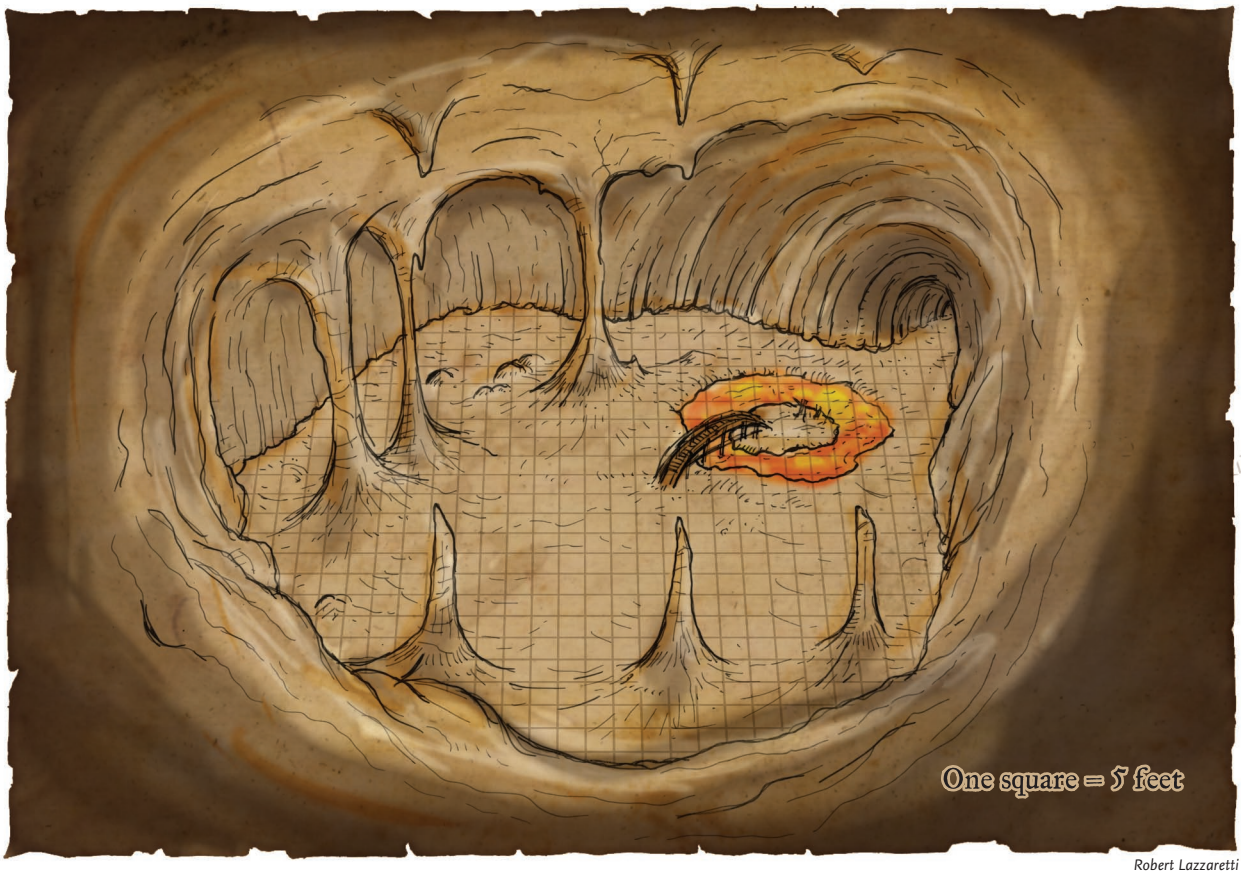

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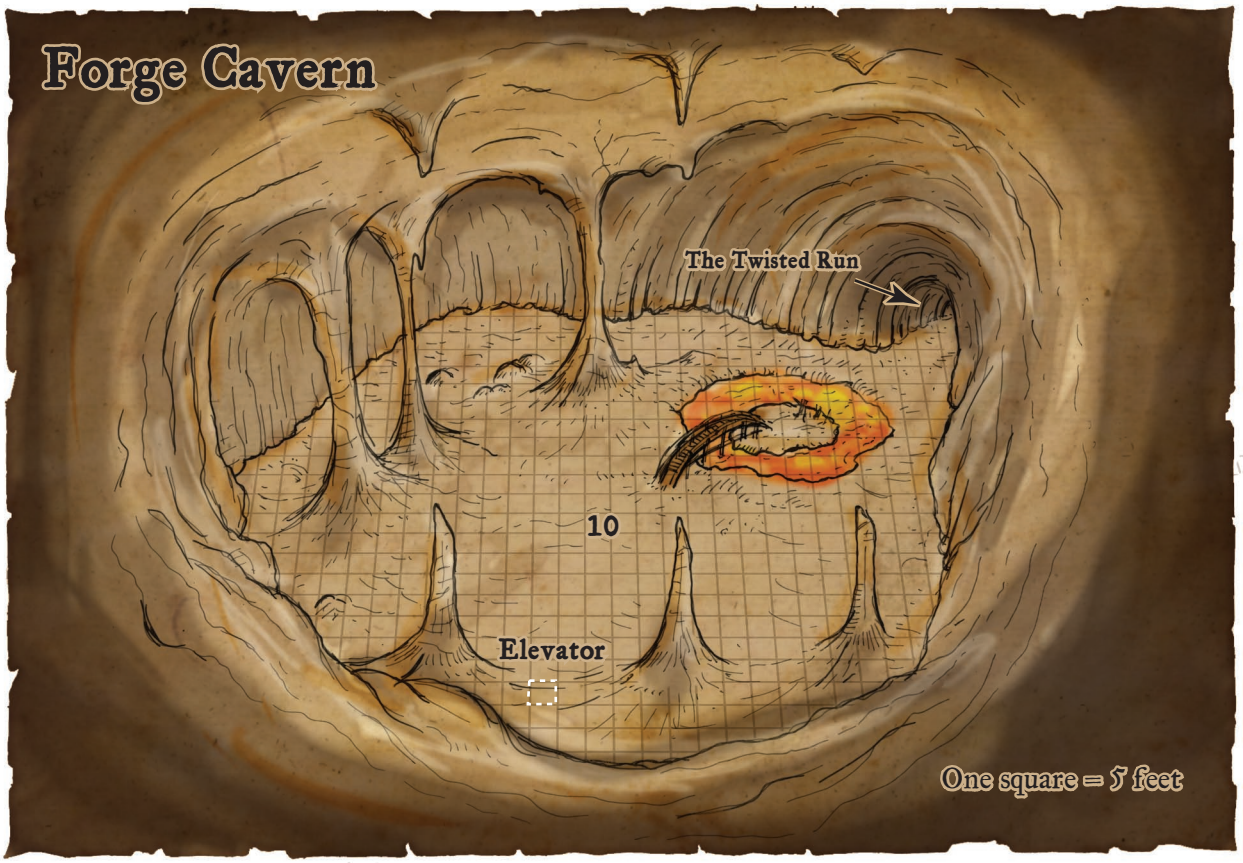

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